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Succession to the caliphate in early Islam

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This thesis will examine the succession to the Islamic Caliphate as it existed during the time of the orthodox Caliphs (632-661).

The four Caliphs who followed the Prophet in the leadership of the Muslim state were referred to collectively as the orthodox Caliphs, and their period was known as the righteous Caliphate (al-Khilafah al-Rashidah). The process of succession of these Caliphs to the Caliphate differed from the procedure followed by the later Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs, who followed ancient hereditary practices. In order to insure the continuity of rulership and the peaceful

transfer of power, however, the Umayyads and the Abbasids sanctioned the procedure of nominating a successor during the lifetime of the Caliph. The practices of the orthodox Caliphs also differed from pre-Islamic Arab practice, which placed great importance on the age and experience of the one chosen. Succession in orthodox times placed central importance on the individual's contact with the Prophet and his good service on behalf of Islam. In fact, all the orthodox Caliphs (al-Kūlafa al-Rashdūn) were credited with high marks on these points.

At the time of the orthodox Caliphs, however, there were no definite rules governing succession to the Caliphate. Their succession procedures were dictated by conditions of their time. The process used by the orthodox Caliphs is now considered the most equitable, for it was done with the consultation of the people and with a free election.

The ninth- and tenth-century Muslim historians, who recorded the history of this period for the first time, were influenced by the hereditary procedures for succession in use during their time. It was also in that time that the theoretical aspects of succession in Islam, and the actual cases of succession of the Abbasids, were committed to writing and discussed by jurists and theologians. One task of this paper will be to outline the ideas brought forth at that time on this matter.

Old Arabic sources, as well as modern Western and Arabic works, were our sources for preparing this thesis. The book of al-Tabari (died 923), History of Prophets and Kings (Tārīkh al-Rusūl Wa-al-Mulūk) was a major source for us. The work of Thomas Arnold, The Caliphate, was also valuable in this research. Another work from which we drew much information is the book of Ali Husni al-Kharbūtlī, al-Islam Wa-al-Khilafah, as well as others which are discussed in Chapter II.

SUCCESSION TO THE CALIPHATE IN EARLY ISLAM

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Succession to the Caliphate was handled differently throughout the history of the Islamic state. The orthodox Caliph's succession was dependent on the election of the people and their agreement on that succession. All of the four orthodox Caliphs were chosen after a heavy consultation among the notables of the community, followed by a general consultation of the whole community, which usually took place in the Mosque. After the selection, the people would swear the oath of allegiance to him as their Caliph. This procedure, a democratic process controlled by the people, was different from that of the Umayyads' and the Abbasids' Caliphs, who followed non-Islamic practices. Their method was a process of hereditary nomination, and it changed the whole institution of the Caliphate from a democratically chosen monarch to a hereditary Kingship.

The Caliphate was kept in the two clans, the Umayyads and the Abbāsids, for about six centuries. Every Caliph was succeeded by his near relative. Consultation of people and free election disappeared. People were forced to swear allegiance to the nominee. Mu'āwiya, the first Umayyad Caliph (661-680), sent word to his governors to obtain

allegiance to his son Yazīd. When the people of Hijaz refused to pledge their allegiance to Yazīd, Mu'āwiya sent soldiers to force those who refused to approve his nomination of his son Yazīd.[1] The Abbāsid Caliph, Harūn al-Rashīd took allegiance for three of his sons: Amin, twelve years of age; Mamūn, twelve years of age; and Qasim, five years old.[2] The Abbāsid Caliph al-Mansūr (754-775) claimed a divine right and called himself a successor of God.[3] The orthodox Caliph Abu-Bakr, on the other hand, refused to be called successor of God. He called himself successor to the Apostle of God.

The significance of the method of succession of the orthodox Caliphs, besides its dependence on the will of the people, was that it was also a succession to the Caliphate, the superpower of the Muslim state.

The Islamic Caliphate played a great and significant role in Islamic history. From the Caliphate was derived many other institutions, such as al-Wizarah (ministry), Ahl-al-Hal Wa al-Aqid (the people who unite and tie), and al-Hijabah (gatekeeper).

Around the Caliphate Muslims were united and powerful, for it was a symbol of unity and power throughout the history of Islam. A great many theories emerged concerning succession to the Caliphate. Muslim theologians, jurists, and historians discussed the problem of the Caliphate for centuries.

Most of the orthodox theologians (ahl-al-Sunah Wa-al-Jama'ah) thought Caliphs should be drawn from the Quraysh tribe. They approved the orthodox Caliphate as well as the Umayyads and the Abbāsids. The Kharijites did not give any consideration to this condition. They believed that the office of the Caliphate could be held by any Muslim. The Shī'ah believed that the Imamate (Caliphate) should come from among the Alids (descendants of Ali ibn Abi-Talib, the Prophet's cousin). A great tradition resulted, therefore, from discussions on the matter of succession to the Caliphate.

The Caliphate itself is considered by most Muslim theologians to be a righteous monarchy. There was also a great deal of historical literature written on the Caliphate. But the medieval work was mostly a record of historical events of the orthodox, Umayyad, and the Abbāsid Caliphates. There were also a few works on the Caliph himself: his titles, his duty, and his rights. It was not until modern times that the study of the Caliphate as an Islamic political institution began. Ideas like the meaning of the Caliphate, the philosophy of the Caliphate, and the origin of the Caliphate have been studied critically. Its significance as the only great popularly elected monarchy in world history (as it existed during the orthodox Caliphates) is of great interest to any student of world history or government. This paper will explore the nature of the

unique selection process that was used, how it came about, how it changed, and how various writers have interpreted it.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Wilson Bishai, Islamic History of the Middle East (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969), p. 168.

[2]Sir William Muir, The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall (London: 1891), p. 477.

[3]Ali Husni al-Kharbūtlī, al-Islam Wa-al-Khilafah (Beirut: Dar al-'alimlil-Malayeen, 1969), p. 147

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The material on the subject of the Islamic Caliphate is plentiful. However, much of it is theoretical and in some respects contradictory. The material is written in Arabic and English, but the Arabic is considered the best source because it contains more information and was written earlier in time, mostly in the ninth and tenth centuries. There is other material written on the subject in Arabic as well as in other languages. I will divide the discussion of the sources into two groups: old sources and modern sources.

OLD SOURCES

One of the main sources on the Islamic Caliphate is the work of al-Tabarī (died 923), History of Prophets and Kings (Tarīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk), which is a universal history starting with the "Creation," the story of all prophets, and the rise of Islam. Al-Tabari's work has a variety of information on the Islamic Caliphate. It gives us the full story of succession to the Caliphate by the orthodox Caliphs. Al-Tabari, a prolific writer, gives us not only detailed information about nomination, and

documents of nomination, but also vivid descriptions of the problems connected with and resulting from succession. In this respect his work is unsurpassed. Al-Tabari is occasionally reproached for his omission of important data, but as far as our subject is concerned, he is very thorough. He often appears to pay too much attention to it, and most later historians derived their information from his work. Another work concerning the subject is that of al-Balādhuri (died 892), who is an older co-contemporary of al-Tabari. In his work Futūh al-Buldān (The Conquests of the Lands), he related political and military events and gave some attention to economic and social conditions.

The work of al-Ya'qubi, Ta'rīkh al-Ya'qubi, is an important source for our subject. It ends in 872. It is of a modest size, special attention is given by him to Shi'ite personalities, and it also contains ample references to the problem of succession. Al-Ya'qubi in this Tārīkh refuses to acknowledge the first three Caliphs or any of the Umayyads or Abbāsids as Caliphs. He does not mention the word "Caliph" in connection with the Umayyads, but restricts himself to the use of the term "malaka" ("he became ruler"). He uses the word "Caliph" or "Caliphate" only when he deals with Ali or his son al-Hassan. For them he uses "Caliphate of," whereas for other Caliphs he uses the words "the days of."

The works of al-Mas'ūdī, the famous geographer, historian, and traveler (died 956), Muruij al-dhahab Wa-m'a adin al Jawhar (Placers of Gold and Mines of Gems) and Kitab al-Tanbīh W-al-Ishraf (Book of Warning and Revision), are not concerned with the political affairs of the Islamic empire. In both works, the problem of succession and the heir apparent is often overlooked, but they include much information on the culture and beliefs of different people within the Caliphate.

Another work which is very helpful for the understanding of the Muslim attitude toward the problem of succession is the Muqaddimah of the great philosopher ibn Khaldūn (died 1406). He takes the position of the orthodox Muslims regarding the Imamate in general and the problem of succession in particular, but his attitude is influenced by the political situation of his time.

Another good source dealing with the Caliphate is al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah of al-Mawardi (died 1059). The work opens with a chapter on the Imamate, its significance, and its attainment. Al-Mawardi gives us different points of view on succession among orthodox schools of thought. Then he discusses the duties and rights of the Caliph. The work in general is good and one of the principal early sources on the subject.

Other works on the subject of the Caliphate and succession to it are: al-Fasl-fial-Milal Waal-Ahwa Waal Nihal

of ibn Hazm which gives us a full account of the Caliphate, the Siyāsatnāmah of Nizam al Muluk (died 1092), and the Systems of Government and the Moslem Dynasties of ibn al-Tiqtaqa (died 1261). Those are the main sources on the subject of Caliphate-Imamate and succession to it in Islam, apart from secondary early sources.

MODERN LITERATURE

Western Sources

For the modern literature written on the subject of the Caliphate and succession to the rule we have the Orientalists' works and the modern Arab scholars' works, which depend on the Orientalists' work, while the Orientalists themselves depend on the old Islamic sources which we mentioned.

Among the earliest works is that of William Muir, The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall, which is a comprehensive study of the Islamic Caliphate from its beginning until its decline.

Another work is The Caliphate of Sir Thomas Arnold, which is a result of Barthold, Becker, Caetani, and Snouck Hurgronje's research. Arnold discusses the origin of the Caliphate, the titles of the Caliph, as well as theological sanction for the Caliphate in the Qur'an and the tradition. The work makes special reference to the Abbāsid Caliphate of Baghdad, as well as the Ottoman Caliphate.

There is also another little book, but it is helpful, and that is the work of Professor Barakatullah of Bhopal, India, The Khilafah, which appeared in 1924. The book is an earnest study of Islamic Caliphate with special reference to conditions of the Ottoman Caliphate of his time. The author has attempted, while giving full weight to historic, political, and religious points of view, to bring the experience of the Muslim nation of his own time to bear upon them. His views on the question of Caliphate are not only based on historic considerations, but also on close and personal observation of Islamic countries of his time. His desire is to influence Muslim public opinion to restore the Caliphate to its rightful status.

Arabic Sources

One of the few works written in Arabic during the first quarter of this century about the Caliphate is the book of Rashīd Ridā, al-Khilafa Wa-l-Imamah al-Kubra. His idea in general about the Caliphate is not significantly different from the medieval Muslim writers. However, he thinks that nomination is innovation (bid'ah), which was introduced by the Caliph Mu'awiyah. He also condemns the Abbāsids because they followed the same way in succession to the rule. He believes that the right Caliphate was that of the orthodox Caliphs who followed the Prophet's way. He has some ideas on establishing the Caliphate in modern times.

Another work contemporary to that of Rashīd Ridā is that of Ali Abd al-Raziq entitled al-Islam Wa Usūl al-hukm (Islam and Fundamentals of Authority). This work was published in 1925 and from that time the book has been critically studied. The writer has strange and new ideas on the Caliphate. He maintains that the idea of the Caliphate has always been a misfortune for Islam and the Muslims. He believes that the early Caliphs built up their position on the basis of economic superiority, conquest, and tyranny, and that political and financial strength continued to determine the succession to the Caliphate throughout its entire history.

Another work which deals directly with the succession to the Caliphate is Nizam al-Hukm fi al-Islam (System of Rule in Islam) by Dr. Muhammad Mūsā. The book has a chapter on the succession to the Caliphate of the orthodox Caliphs. The writer believes that the consultation is the best way to choose the Caliph.

Finally, we will say a word about the work of Ali Husni al-Kharbūtlī, al-Islam Wa-al-Khilafah (The Caliphate and Islam). The work is a scientific study on the Caliphate which depends on both medieval Muslim works and the Orientalists' works. Al-Kharbūtlī discusses the Caliphate in a judicial and historical framework. He starts by talking about the rise of the Caliphate, the philosophy of the Caliphate, the different points of view of the Muslim sects

on the Caliphate, and a historical record of the Islamic Caliphate since its rise in Medina until its decline in Turkey.

CHAPTER III

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC CALIPHATE

The Islamic Caliphate arose in Medina in 632, just after the Prophet's death. The Muslims elected Abu-Bakr as the first Caliph (successor to the Prophet). Shortly after his election, Abu-Bakr sent Usama Bin Zaid, whom the Prophet had nominated before his death as an army commander, to the Syrian border to explore that area for future expansion. At the same time the first Caliph faced the apostasy of many tribes from Islam, and also their nonrecognition of the supremacy of Medina. This apostasy was given different explanations by later historians, Muslims, and Westerners. Some explain it in economic terms, saying that the Arabs did not want to pay the Zakat (religious tax). Others blame it on the nature of the Arabs who allegedly refuse to obey any kind of State. Most Muslim historians think it was an apostasy of these tribes from their belief, and that the reason for it was that they did not know the religion well. Moreover, their belief was not as strong as that of the Muslims of Medina in the first place.

Abu-Bakr appointed Khalid ibn al-Walid as chief commander of the Muslim troops to fight the apostates.[1] The

Muslim army was divided into eleven columns. These columns went out of Medina in different directions. Khalid himself led his army against the Asad tribe and defeated Talha in the battle of Buzakha.[2] After this victory, Khalid attacked the Tamim tribe and defeated their leader, Malik ibn Nuwayra. Then Khalid took his army toward Yamamah where he met Musaylama's troops and defeated them after thousands were killed on both sides.[3] Khalid then campaigned north while Ikrama went south and both won numerous victories over the tribes of the south and north borders of Arabia. Less than two years later the whole of Arabia was brought back to Islam and the religion was ready to spread outside the borders of Arabia.

Abu-Bakr organized the Muslim army under the leadership of Khalid, 'Amur ibn al-'As, Abu-Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah, and Sharhabil. He ordered Khalid to proceed toward Syria, ibn al-'As to follow the coastal line, and Sharhabil to advance along the overland route. When Sharhabil had some problems on the way, Abu-Bakr sent ibn al-Jarrah to take his place.

These armies began their operations in southern and southeast Syria, and advanced to the north. While Abu-Ubaydah and Umar moved slowly, Khalid ibn al-Walid moved rapidly, capturing Iraq, but the Caliph Abu-Bakr ordered him to go to Syria to help Abu-Ubaydah there. In 634 the Muslims won a victory in the battle of Ajnadin. Abu-Bakr

died at that time, and Umar ibn al-Khattab became Caliph in Medina. Umar removed Khalid from the command of the army, and Khalid quickly became a regular soldier in the army. As early as the summer of 634, the Muslims took Busra (in Huran) and defeated the Byzantine army of Ajnadin and Fihal.

The big Byzantine army led by Emperor Heraclius was camped in the Yarmuk Valley in southern Syria. According to al-Balādhurī, a sandy wind darkened the sky and the Muslims surprised the Byzantine army, which was completely defeated.[4] This battle, called the Battle of Yarmuk, took place in 636. The whole of Syria came under the control of the Muslims. The Arabs again occupied Damascus.

In Iraq the Muslims captured the Hira in 634. In June 637 the Muslims won a major victory over the Sassanid army at the Qadisiyya. Two or three weeks later the Muslims entered the Sassanid capital of Ctesiphon, following the fleeing Persian troops to the north and east and defeating them again at Jalula. The Persian Emperor Yazdgird III escaped to Hamadan. At Nihavend (Nihawand) near Hamadan he met with the Muslims in a big battle in 642, and was defeated and hunted afterwards from one city to another until he was killed at Merv (Marw). In the year 651 the Muslims controlled all of Persia (including what is now Iraq).

The Muslims had already invaded Armenia in 640, soon after the conquest of Syria, and taken its capital, Divin. In 654, they reached Tablisi (Taflis).[5]

Shortly after their victories in Iraq and Syria, the Muslims turned to Africa. Egypt was the first country in northern Africa to receive the Muslims. The first intrusion into Egypt by a small Muslim army commanded by Amur ibn al-'As was in December 639. Ibn al-'As took al-Arish and continued his march westward. In January 640, Amur's troops took Farama, advanced to the Nile, and reached the Fayyum. In June, the Muslims defeated the Byzantines near Heliopolis. In April 641, they took Babylon (Babalyun) and went down the Nile on their way to Alexandria. In September 642, the Muslims entered Alexandria, completing the Muslim conquest of Egypt.

From Egypt, Amur ibn al-As sent troops to Libya. In 642 the Muslims took the town of Baraqa and moved to Tripoli, which was captured in 643.

The last two years of the Caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab were spent organizing the Muslim Empire, which included Arabia, Iraq, Persia, Syria, and Egypt. Umar was assassinated in November 644. Uthman ibn Affan was elected as his successor three days after the burial of Umar.[6] The Caliph Uthman appointed ibn Abi Sarh as governor of Egypt. Ibn Sarh recaptured Alexandria in 646. In 647, the Muslim army, commanded by ibn Sarh, captured Ifriqiya (Tunisia) and defeated the Byzantines near the fortress of Sebeitla.[7]

In Syria, the Muslims drove the Byzantines deep into Anatolia. Mu'awiya, who was the governor of Syria, built

a navy and attacked the Byzantines from the sea in their home towns.[8] In the east, meanwhile, Muslims continued to conquer cities on the eastern borders of Persia toward India, and on the northern borders as far as Marv and Azarbayjan.[9]

In Medina, the Caliph Uthman was assassinated and Ali bin Abi-Talib was elected as his successor. Ali did not contribute to the Muslim conquest for an unstable situation followed Uthman's murder in 656. Ali won a victory over Talha, Zubair, and Aisha (the Prophet's wife) in the Battle of the Camel in 656.

In 657, in Siffin, on the right bank of the Euphrates, a famous battle was joined between Ali and Mu'āwiya. It was in that battle that a group of Muslims, later called the Kharijites, broke away from the camp of Ali. In 661, Ali was murdered by a Kharijite with a poisoned dagger as he was entering the mosque of Kūfa. In the same year, Mu'āwiya was proclaimed Caliph in Syria and Egypt. He then went to Kūfa, where he obtained the allegiance of the people there. This was the beginning of the Umayyad Caliphate and the start of a new era in Muslim history.

Mu'āwiya succeeded not only in transferring the Caliphate to the Umayyad clan, but also in transforming it into a hereditary monarchy.[10] He also transferred the capital of the Muslim empire to Damascus. Mu'āwiya surrounded himself with bodyguards, initiated a palace court, and

assembled a royal entourage. Furthermore, Mu'āwiya nominated his son Yazīd as his successor (heir apparent) and swore allegiance to him before he died in 680.

With the end of the war between Ali and Mu'āwiya and the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate in 661, the Muslims resumed their conquests by conquering Bukhara and Samarqand. Further south the Muslims also conquered the Sind in India.[11]

At sea, there was even greater activity than on land. In 670 a Muslim fleet sailed through the Dardanelles. In 672 another fleet captured Rhodes and soon thereafter they captured Sicily. In 677, the Muslims assaulted the walls of Constantinople.[12]

Mu'āwiya reappointed Amur ibn al-As as governor of Egypt. Amur sent his nephew, Uqba ibn Nafi, to conquer North Africa. He reached Tunisia in 670 and built his camp at Qairwan. In 682, he marched to the west until he reached the River Sus in Muretania (modern Morocco). On his way back to the east, he was attacked by the Berbers and he and his army were all killed.[13] The Muslims lost Qairwan and went back to Barqa.

As we mentioned, Mu'āwiya died in April 680, and Yazīd proclaimed the Caliphate in Damascus. Many Muslims did not accept Yazīd as Caliph, for the Arabs never accepted hereditary succession. Moreover, Yazīd was not a religious

person and there were many "companions" among the Muslims who would have had the moral right to be Caliph.

Husayn ibn Ali was in Medina. He received letters from Kūfa inviting him to come and establish the Caliphate in Iraq. Husayn left Medina for Iraq with his family. With the news of Husayn's movement to Kūfa, Yazīd appointed Ubaidullah ibn Ziyyad as governor of Kūfa. Husayn crossed the desert, but was forced to stop in a place called Kerbela. Husayn was willing to go and confront Yazīd in Damascus. Ubaidullah, however, insisted on unconditional surrender. Husayn refused that, so the army of Ubaidullah attacked him. They were four thousand cavalry while Husayn was with seventy-two of his relatives. They killed Husayn and most of his men and took his women as prisoners.[14]

The defeat of Husayn ibn Ali did not bring peace to Yazīd. In the fall of 682, Medina revolted against him. Meanwhile, Mecca also had revolted. Yazīd died in Damascus and was succeeded by his son, Mu'awiya II, in November 683, and he died shortly afterwards. Marwan ibn al-Hakam then became Caliph at Damascus. He died in 685 and his son, Abdul Malik ibn Marwan, proclaimed himself as his successor.[15] Abdul Malik was confronted by the Shi'ites and the Kharijites in Iraq and the revolution of Abdulah ibn al-Zubair in Mecca. He stayed in Damascus until 691, where he became strong and invaded Iraq, defeating the brother of ibn al-Zubair. Early in 692, he sent an army to capture

Mecca. Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, the commander of that army, besieged Mecca for eight months. On October 3, 692, when ibn al-Zubair saw that further resistance was impossible, he stood out alone against the Umayyad army. He was then killed,[16] and Abdul Malik became sole Caliph, though Iraq was still disturbed by the rival activities of the Shi'ites and the Kharijites. Abdul Malik assigned al-Hajjaj as governor of Iraq, who controlled it firmly.

Abdul Malik resumed the wars of conquest once again. We mentioned already the advance of Uqba in North Africa, the foundation of the Qairwan Camp, and the withdrawal of Muslims to Baraqa. Hassan ibn al-Naaman reestablished the camp of Qairwan, but he was defeated by the Berber tribe, the Zenata. In 702, Hassan, strongly reinforced, defeated the Zenata. In 705, Abdul Malik died and was succeeded by his son Waleed. Waleed appointed Musa ibn Nusair as governor of North Africa. In April 711, Musa sent an army of twelve thousand men across the Straits of Gibraltar under Tariq bin Ziyad. Tariq established his base there at a place known ever since by his name. A big battle was fought and the Goths were completely defeated. Tariq conquered their capital, Toledo. The following year Musa joined Tariq after he crossed to Spain and captured the cities of Seville and Marida.[17]

While Musa and Tariq were opening Spain for the Muslims, Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, in the eastern part of the empire,

sent Qutaiba ibn Muslim to cross the river Jaxartes to Kashgar in Sinkiang. In the meantime, Muhammad ibn Qasim advanced in India (Sind), killed its king, and took Multan in 713.[18]

Sulayman ibn Abdul Malik succeeded his brother, Waleed, in the Umayyad Caliphate. The most remarkable event in his reign was the second Muslim siege of Constantinople from 816 until 717. The commander of the Muslim fleet was Maslama ibn Abdul Malik. The Muslims besieged the city from the sea for about six months. Winter came and they were beset by cold and snow for three months. In the spring of 717, the Muslim army was attacked by the Byzantines from the rear. During the battle the Caliph Sulayman died in Damascus. His successor, Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz, ordered the army to return to Syria. Umar was a great ruler who ruled the Islamic Empire after the manner of the orthodox Caliphs. Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz ruled for two years and nine months. He was succeeded by Yazeed ibn Abdul Malik, who was weak and died on January 28, 724. He was succeeded by Hisham ibn Abdul Malik, who is considered a great Caliph by some Muslim historians.[19] He died in 743 after ruling nineteen years.

After Hisham's death, the Umayyad Caliphate rapidly declined. The new Caliph, Waleed II, was a libertine and a drunkard. He was killed by Yazeed III in April 744.[20] Yazeed III was proclaimed a Caliph who appeared more sober, but he died in October 744 after a reign of six months. The

Umayyad Caliphate seemed to be in crisis. Then Marwan ibn Muhammad, who was for twenty years the military commander and governor of Jezira and Azarbayjan, marched to Damascus and was acclaimed as Caliph on November 23, 744.

At that time the Abbāsid movement began. Muhammad bin Ali ibn Abdulah was their head. In 742 Bukayr, one of the Abbāsid movement's organizers, discovered a young Persian called Abu Muslim, who introduced him to Muhammad and his son, Ibrahim, the Imam. Abu Muslim was then sent to Khurasan to campaign for the Abbāsids in his home town.[21] Shortly afterwards Muhammad ibn Ali, the founder of the Abbāsid movement, died. His son Ibrahim succeeded him as leader of the movement. Ibrahim appointed Abu Muslim as chief commander of the Abbāsid movement in Khurasan. In 748, Abu Muslim captured Merv with the help of the Yemenites. While Marwan was fighting the Khawarij, Abu Muslim captured Kufa in August 749, and installed the Abbāsid family there.

On January 25, 750, a great battle was fought between the Abbāsid and the Umayyad armies. Marwan, the Umayyad Caliph, was defeated and fled to Egypt where he was killed on August 5, 750. Abu al-Abbas al Safah, "The Blood Shedder," as Muslim historians called him, died in June 754. He was succeeded by his brother, Abu Jafar al-Mansur (Victorious). The most famous achievement of al-Mansur was the founding of the city of Baghdad.

In North Africa, a rebellion broke out and Qairwan was taken out of the Muslim empire. The Berbers established an independent state south of the Atlas Mountains. Moreover, the revolt was led by Abd al-Rahmān ibn Mu'āwiya, who succeeded in establishing the Umayyad state in Andalusia. Only thirteen years after the foundation of the Abbāsid Caliphate, the western end of the Islamic Empire began to break away.

Al-Mansur died in October 775 near Mecca,[22] and was succeeded by his son al-Mahdi. Al-Mahdi introduced a new official post in the government called Wazeer, or chief minister. He also tried to renew the Muslim struggle against the Byzantines, but he died in August 785. He was succeeded by his eldest son, al-Hadi, who ruled for only fourteen months, and died in September 786. He was succeeded by the famous Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, one of the great rulers of the world. Under Hārūn al-Rashīd, the Muslim Empire reached its highest level of wealth and extent. Baghdad was the richest city in the world, not just financially but intellectually as well.

In 802, Hārūn al-Rashīd caused oaths of allegiance to be taken to three of his sons, Ameen, Mamoon, and Mutasim. In 803, the Caliph ordered the instant decapitation of his Wazeer, Ja'ffar Barmecids, the imprisonment of his family, and the confiscation of their huge wealth,

because he saw their rapidly increasing power and influence as a direct threat to his own power.

Hārūn also attacked the Byzantines, who agreed to pay him tribute and to free all Muslim prisoners.

In the fall of 808, he traveled to Khūrasan, where he installed his son Mamoon as governor. He then became ill and died outside the Persian town of Tus.

Not more than a year after Hārūn's death in March 809, conflict broke out between his sons Ameen and Mamoon. Mamoon was a governor of Khurasan and Ameen was Caliph in Baghdad. Mamoon and his army besieged Baghdad, then occupied it, and killed his brother. His reign was famous for the growth of intellectual life.

Mamoon gave much attention to scientific and intellectual matters, but in 830 he attacked the Byzantines and destroyed a number of their towns. In the following years--831, 832, and 833--he attacked the Byzantines until a peace agreement was signed between them. On his return from the last attack he fell ill and died near Tarsus. He was succeeded by his brother Mautasim, whose characteristics were different than those of Mamoon. Mutasim was interested in military activities.[23] He built a strong army, mostly made up of Turkish slaves who behaved arrogantly toward the people of Baghdad. Then Mutasim built a new capital, which he named Samarra, on the Tigris. In 837, the Byzantine Emperor, Theophilus, captured the town of Zebetra and razed

it to the ground. More than one thousand women were taken as slaves,[24] and many men had their eyes put out.

In June 838, Mutasim went out for revenge. Theophilus was completely defeated. Angara and Amorium were captured.

Mutasim died on January 5, 842 at the age of forty-seven. His son Wathiq succeeded him to the Caliphate. He, like Mamoon, was interested in books rather than swords. His reign was not long, for he died in 847.

The next Caliph, Mutawakkil, a younger son of Mutasim, lived in Samarra and was not much different than his brother Wathiq. He nominated his son Mustain as his successor, but his other wife persuaded him to change the nomination to her son Mutazz. Bugha, a Turkish slave, reached high rank in the government and conspired with al-Mustain to kill the Caliph Mutawakkil on December 10, 861. Mustain was then declared Caliph by the Turkish soldiers.

From then on the Abbāsid Caliphs were wholly dependent on their Turkish guards. The Turkish high officers began to intervene in the succession of the Caliphs, putting forward their own candidates. This was the beginning of the decline of the Abbāsid Caliphate. The rest of the Abbasid Caliphate's history was no more than the assassination of one Caliph and the accession of the next, and a tale of many rebellions in different areas of the empire. These rebellions and rebels caused the foundation of many regional dynasties in the late Abbāsid period, among them the Tahirid

Dynasty in eastern Persia, 820-872; the Saffarid Dynasty, 872-920; the Samanid Dynasty, 910-999; the Ghaznavid Dynasty, 999-1186; the Hamadanis of Musul and Alepo, 931-1003; and the Atabegs of Musul, 1127-1182. In North Africa a number of separate dynasties also arose, such as the Idrisids, 788-922; the Aghalabids, 800-909; the Murabits, 1062-1145; and the Muwahhids, 1145-1223; as well as the Umayyad rule in Spain. In Egypt, also, there were some independent dynasties including the Tulunids, 868-905; followed by the Ikhashidids, 935-969; then the Fatimid Caliphate, 969-1117; and the Ayyubid State, 1171-1260.[25]

In Baghdad, the capital of the Abbāsid Caliphate, the real power was in the hands of the Turkish mercenaries in the period 861-946. These commanders were frequently divided among themselves. The Empire, therefore, gradually disintegrated. The Caliph al-Muqtadir (died 932) appointed an official as Chief Prince (amir al-Umara) to solve the problems of the Empire. While the Caliph and his Chief Prince were busy solving their problems, the Buwayhids Dynastry captured Baghdad. The Buwayhids Dynasty came to an end and when Mahmud the Ghaznavid defeated the Buwayhids army in 1029. However, in 1055, a Seljuq Turk named Tughril Beg captured Baghdad and put an end to the Buwayhid regime.[26]

Tughril established the Seljuq regime, which lasted until the Seljuqs were defeated in 1181 by the Khawarizms.

The Caliph al-Nasir, who some historians believe incited the Khawarizm Shahs against the Seljuq Sultans, fought against the Khawarizms. Then in 1220, the regime was crushed by the Mongols. The end of the Khawarizm state in Khawarizm brought an end to the Abbāsid rule in Baghdad. Al-Musta^{c}sim came to the Caliphate in 1242. In 1256, Hulāgū, the Mongol leader, traveled westward to build a new empire. He sent a message to the Caliph al-Musta^{c}sim to surrender, but the Caliph refused. In January 1258, Hulāgū and his warriors captured Baghdad and killed the last Abbāsid Caliph and his family. That marked the end of the Abbāsid Caliphate in Baghdad and the Muslim Empire which had ruled over six centuries.

The Abbāsid Caliphate was reestablished in Cairo when the Mamlūks of Egypt invited an uncle of the last Abbāsid Caliph to Cairo and installed him as a Caliph. The Ottoman Sultans reestablished the Islamic Caliphate in Constantinople in the thirteenth century. This new Caliphate lasted until March 1924, when Mustafa Kamal, a Turkish officer, terminated it. This marked the end of the Ottoman Empire and the demise of the last Islamic Caliphate.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Ali Sayed Ameer, A Short History of the Saracens (London: Macmillan, 1927), p. 18.

[2]Uazz al-Dien Abial-Hassan ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fī-al-Tariekh (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1965), 2:139.

[3]Philip Kūri Hitti, History of the Arabs from the Earliest Time to the Present (London: Martains Press, 1956), p. 140.

[4]Ahmad bin Jabir al-Balādhurī, Futūh al-Buldān (Cairo: 1955), 2:231.

[5]Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 158.

[6]Jalal al-Din al-Suyūtī, Tariekh al-Khūlafa (Cairo: 1952), p. 153.

[7]Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 167.

[8]Abd al-Wahab al-Najjar, al-Khūlafa al-Rashdūn, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Maktbat Wahbah, 1960), p. 59.

[9]Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 172.

[10]al-Najjar, al-Khūlafa al-Rashdūn, p. 105.

[11]Sir William Muir, The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall (London: 1891), p. 322.

[12]Ibid., p. 323.

[13]Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 184.

[14]Hussayn Tahā, al-Fitnah al-Khūbra (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arief, 1962), p. 40.

[15]Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 402.

[16]Ibid., p. 423.

[17]al-Balādhurī, Futūh al-Buldān, 3:205.

[18]Ibid., 3:206.

[19]Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Mas'ūdī, Muruij al-Dhab Wa-Madin al-Jawhar (Beirut: Dar al-Andalūs, 1965), 4:220.

[20]Sa'dāwi, al-Dawlah al-Arabiyah al-Islamiyah (Cairo: 1967), p. 208.

[21]al-Balādhurī, Futūh al-Buldān, 3:301.

[22]al-Mas'ūdī, Muruij al-Dhab Wa-Madin al-Jawhar, 4:231.

[23]al-Suyūtī, Tariekh al-Khūlafa, p. 101.

[24]Muir, The Caliphate, p. 565.

[25]Wilson Bishai, Islamic History of the Middle East (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968), pp. 269-88.

[26]Ibid., p. 278.

CHAPTER IV

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CALIPHATE

THE MEANING OF THE CALIPHATE

Khalifah (Caliph) means successor, the one who succeeds somebody in any position, or comes after him. The term was used for the first time by Muslims, referring to Abu-Bakr al-Sidiq when he succeeded the Prophet in 632. Abu-Bakr was called Khalifah Rasul Allah (the successor of the Apostle of God) and from that time the term applied for all heads of the Muslim state.

The title Khalifah (Caliph) implied the functions of a leader and a judge. His duty was not to give new interpretations in religious matters, but to adhere to the Quran and tradition. The office of the Caliphate was charged with applying and defending the Shari'a[1] (Islamic law). Thus the Caliph had spiritual and wordly functions, and served as spiritual and political leader.

The Caliphate in the Quran and the Tradition

There are some verses in the Holy Quran in which the terms "Khalifah" (successor) and "Khūlafa" (successors) occur as in the following verses:

> God has promised to those among you who believe and work righteousness, that God will make them, even as he made those who were before them the successors, and that he will establish for them their religion which is pleasing to them, and that after their fear he will give them security in exchange.[2]

> It is God who has made you his successors (Khala'if) on the earth and has raised some of you above others by [various] grades in order that he may test you by his gifts.[3]

Here the reference is to "successors" in general. In a similar use for the term but with a specific reference to the pre-Islamic Arabian tribe "Ād" when God made successors to the earth after the people of Noah, he said:

> Marvel ye that a warning is given to you from your Lord through one of yourselves, that he may warn you? But remember that he made you successors after the people of Noah and increased you in tallness of stature.[4]

In this verse it is clear that the people of "Ād" came after the people of Noah and God made them their successors. Another verse in the Quran tells us about another Arabian tribe, the "Thamud," who rejected God's blessing when he made them successors of "Ād":

> And remember that he made you successors of 'Ād' and gave you dwellings in the land, so that ye build castles on its plains and hew out houses in the mountain: Then remember the benefits of God and do not do evil in the land.[5]

Here is again the reference to a group of people and not to the Islamic Caliph.

But there are two other verses in the Quran in which they have individual reference; the first one is Adam, whom God made Caliph on the earth:

> When the Lord said to the angels, verily I am about to place on the earth a successor [Khalifah], they said, Wilt thou place there one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?[6]

In the other verse, the reference is made to David:

> O David, verily we have made thee a successor [Khalifah] in the land, then judge between men with the truth, and follow not thy desires, least they cause thee to err from the path of God.[7]

The word Caliph in these two verses means more than successor. Thus when God created Adam, he called him Khalifah (successor), for Adam would become a successor of the angels who used to live on earth.[8] Another interpretation of the word "Khalifah" is a vicergent, a successor in the sense of one who succeeds to some high function.

Adam and David are vicergents of God, in their guidance of men on earth. Muslim commentators tried to connect the meaning of the "Khalifah" with the Muslim historic Caliph.

In the traditions of the Prophet, which are considered the second source in Islam after the Quran, the word Caliph occurs only twice, while the word Imam, the head of the Muslim state, is used many times there.

> The Imams shall be of the Quraysh; There shall always be a ruler over men from among the Quraysh; The Imams shall be of the Quraysh; the righteous of them, rulers over the righteous among them, and the wicked of them, rulers over the wicked among them.[9]

When the Ansar (Helpers) tried to elect a Caliph from among themselves after the death of the Prophet, Abu-Bakr persuaded them not to do so by telling them he had heard

the Prophet say, "The Imams shall be of Quraysh." This qualification was fulfilled throughout the history of the Islamic state. The Orthodox Caliphs, the Umayyads, and the Abbāsids were from Quraysh, except the Ottoman Caliphs were not Qurayshite.

The Prophet impelled the Muslims to obey their Imams (Caliphs) when he said:

> Who obeys me, obeys God, and who rebels against me, rebels against God; who obeys the ruler, obeys me, and who rebels against the ruler, rebels against me.[10]

He also said:

> After me will come rulers, render them your obedience, for the ruler is like a shield wherewith a man protects himself, if they are righteous and rule you well, they shall have their reward, if they do evil and rule you badly then God will punish them, for they are responsible for you and you have no responsibility.
>
> Obey your rulers whatever they are, for if they do anything different than what I have taught you, they shall be punished for it and you will be rewarded for your obedience, and if they do anything different than what I have taught you, the responsibility is theirs and you are acquitted of it.

The Prophet also said, "Obey every ruler [Amir], pray behind every Imam and do not insult any one of my companions."[11] Obedience was indicated in the tradition not just for the Imam, but any lawful authority, when the Prophet said,"O men, obey God, even though he set over you as your ruler an Abyssinian slave." The subjects must obey their rulers, however they treat them. The only satisfaction they get is that God will punish the unjust ruler and reward his subjects for their obedience.[12] Concerning this belief, the

Prophet said:

> When God wishes good for a people, he sets over them the wise and places their goods in the hands of a generous ruler, but when God wishes bad for a people, he sets over them the witless and puts their goods in the hands of avaricious rulers.[13]

The Prophet, in discussing the future of the Caliphate and the Muslim community, said:

> When in those days you see the Caliphate of God upon earth, attach yourself closely to it, even though it may destroy your body and rob you of your property.

He also said:

> If the government is just, it may expect reward from God, and the subjects ought to show their gratitude to it, if it is unjust it increases the sin, but the subjects should support it.[14]

In later times it appeared that both the Umayyads and the Abbāsids cited some Hadiths (sayings of the Prophet) in support of their political position. For example, the Abbāsids claimed that the Prophet said, "The Caliphate shall abide among the children of my paternal uncle [Abbs] and of the race of my father until they deliver it to the Messiah."[15] Also, the Prophet was presented as having said to the Abbas:

> When your children will inhabit Sawad [Iraq] they will wear black and their followers will be the children of Khurasan, and the government will not cease to abide with them until they give it to Jesus, the son of Mary.[16]

The Titles of the Caliph

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a political leader in addition to his prophetic function. He was

the head of the state, he controlled its political policy, received ambassadors, and assigned officials to control taxes and dues. He led the army. He was at the same time the supreme legislator and supreme judge.[17] Abu-Bakr al-Sidiq succeeded him in all these respects except the prophetic function. Thus the Muslims called him the successor to the Apostle of God. When Umar succeeded Abu-Bakr, they called him successor to the Successor of the Apostle of God (Khalifah Khalifah Rasul Allah), but when the Muslims realized this title was too long, they called Umar simply "Caliph" (Khalifah). The Prophet himself did not indicate that the head of the Muslim state was to be called "Khalifah" (successor), and neither does the Quran. It was a term used by the Muslim community. The title "Amir al-Muminin" (the Commander of the Faithful) appeared in Umar's time. It was reported that Umar hated to be addressed by this title at first because it was so vainglorious. The title had been used before by Abdullah ibn Jahsh, who was killed in the battle of Uhud in the third year of the Hijrah (624 A.D.). The use of the title "Amir al-Muminin" reflected the significance of Muslim power.[18] This title does not appear in the Quran at all, unlike the titles "Khalifah" and "Imam" which, as we have seen, do appear in the Quran. The title "Amir al-Muminin" became common after Umar. All the Umayyad and the Abbasid Caliphs used it.

Another title used for the head of the Muslim state is "Imam." The title Imam was used in reference to the religious duty of the Caliph. This title has received more favor among the Shi'ah Muslims than any other title.[19] The word "Imam" occurs in the Quran as a leader and a guide. God speaks to Isaac and Jacob, "We made them leaders [Imams] who should guide [men] by our command."[20] God also told Ibraham, "I will make thee a leader for men."[21] The word Imam had been used originally for the one who conducts the prayer (Salah), what the Muslims called al-Imamah al-Kūbra (the Greater Imamate). Then the term was used for the Caliphate and they called it al-Imamah al-Suqra (the Lesser Imamate), for the Caliph had a religious function besides his political one.[22]

The Prophet was the Imam of the public prayer in the mosque during his lifetime in Medina. When his illness prevented him from leading the public prayers, he then appointed Abu-Bakr to be Imam of the prayers. This facilitated his election as a successor of the Prophet,[23] because the Muslims considered the leadership of worship more important than the leadership of the state. Thus, this leadership of the public prayer was looked upon as a symbol of leadership in general. All the Caliphs and their governors who came after the death of the Prophet were responsible for leading the public worship in the mosque.[24]

The Caliphate in Philosophical and Mystical Writings

Early Islamic philosophy had been influenced by Greek philosophy. The Muslim philosophers of the ninth century translated a great many Greek works on philosophy and science. Although many of the translations were on scientific work in mathematics, metaphysics, and logic, Greek political thought was not completely neglected.[25] Aristotle's formal logic was used by the theological adversaries of Muslim philosophies. In fact, most of the commentaries known to the Greeks were studied and discussed by Muslim philosophers. Plato's Timaeus, Republic, and Laws were translated and studied.[26] They became textbooks of political theory in the schools. Of the Muslim philosophers in the ninth century, Muslim philosophers also applied the political doctrine of Aristotle to the Islamic Caliphate.

Al-Farabi, the Muslim philosopher who died in 950, devised a political theory similar to the Platonic doctrine. He called for an ideal state to be ruled by philosophers. This ideal state would be under the guidance of a leader who knew the right thing to do for his people. Without this kind of leader, the state could not attain its goals. This leader must be intelligent, have a love of justice, and a pure soul. Al-Farabi's rational theory did not deal too much with the political situation of his time. But his rational theories could be applied to the Caliphate.[27]

Another Muslim political philosophy was that of Ikhwan us-Safa, a group of philosophers of the latter part of the tenth century. They had a doctrine concerning the Caliphate which criticized the weakness of the Abbāsid Caliph. The political doctrine of Ikhwan us-Safa had a religious basis. They regarded kings as the Caliphs of God on earth, given power by him to rule, and judge between his servants. The Caliphs were judges, kings, and protectors of religion.

This philosophic doctrine was developed by Shihab ud-Din Suhrawardi, who was executed for his philosophical ideas in 1191 in Aleppo. He indicated that the proper Khalifah was one who practiced the philosophy by manifest proofs and signs, and that this Khilafah would remain forever. Al-Suhrawardi thought that if certain categories of philosophic and theosophic knowledge occurred in a person he must be the Khalifah. If this kind of person could not be found, then the claim to the Caliphate went to the complete theosphist. Suhrawardi's understanding of the Caliphate was based on Sufism. He saw the Caliphate not as a seat of world power, for its rightful heir might live in poverty, but power would be found for him and he would be declared Caliph. The light would then come. Without that declaration and coming of light, darkness would stay forever.[28]

Ibn Khaldun, the well-known Muslim historian and philosopher of the fourteenth century, had a political theory concerning the Khilafah (Imamate). The early Caliphate had a considerable influence on his theory.[29] He thought the simple way of the first four Caliphs for receving the Bay'ah (oath of allegiance) was ideal. He then recognized the change in the Caliphate when it passed to the hands of the Umayyads and the Abbāsids, and the power of the Caliphate came to be ruled by force (Asabiyya). Ibn Khaldun tried to rationalize the shift in the Caliphate. He simply claimed that the Khalifah (Imam) was protecting religion and leading his people in life.[30]

Another significant philosophical work is that of Nizam al-Mulik (the great minister of the Seljuq Sultans) which appeared in 1092, dedicated to Sultan Malikshah. His work was more practical advice than philosophical theory. He advised the governor to listen to people, told him how to judge them, and how he could supervise the various functions of the state: military, judicial, and financial. He supported the doctrine of kingship, which became well-recognized in his time.[31]

In Muslim Sufi writings, the Caliph became the Qutb (Pivot) or perfect man (al-Insan al-Kamil) around whom the spheres of being evolve, upon whom the Muhammadan reality (al-Haqiqah al-Muhammadiyah) rests and the hidden side (baten) of which manifests the Qutb (the Caliph) on the plane

of manifestation.[32] The Sufi writers do not unite al-Khilafah al-Zahirah with al-Khilafah al-Batinah as did al-Khulafa al-Rashdun. They deal only with al-Khilafah al-Batinyah. In their understanding, the Caliph may be a founder of a tariqah (Sufi order) or an initiate (murid) in a tariqah.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The Encyclopedia of Islam, new ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), 4:948.

[2]Ali A. Yusuf, Translation and Commentary of the Glorious Quran (USA: American Trust Publications, 1977), Surah XXIV, Verse 54.

[3]Ibid., Surah VI, Verse 165.

[4]Ibid., Surah VII, Verse 67.

[5]Ibid., Surah VII, Verse 72.

[6]Ibid., Surah VII, Verse 28.

[7]Ibid., Surah XXXVII, Verse 25.

[8]Sir Thomas Arnold, The Caliphate (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1965), p. 45.

[9]al-Suyuti, Tariekh al-Khulafa, p. 9.

[10]Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari (Egypt: Muhammad Auwaydah, 1970), 6:6.

[11]Ibid., 6:7.

[12]Arnold, The Caliphate, p. 48.

[13]al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, 6:7.

[14]Ibid., 6:9.

[15]al-Suyuti, Tariekh al-Khulafa, p. 256.

[16]Ibid., p. 16.

[17]Arnold, The Caliphate, p. 30.

[18]Ali Hussni al-Kharbūtlī, al-Islam Wa-al-Khilafa (Beirut: Dar al-'alimlil-Malayeen, 1969), p. 48.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Yusuf, The Glorious Quran, Surah XXI, Verse 73.

[21]Ibid., Surah II, Verse 118.

[22]Arnold, The Caliphate, p. 35.

[23]Ibid., p. 36.

[24]Ibid., p. 35.

[25]Ibid., p. 121.

[26]Richard Walzer, Greek into Arabic (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1962), 1:5.

[27]Arnold, The Caliphate, p. 122.

[28]Ibid., p. 125.

[29]Muhammad Rabī, The Political Theory of ibn-Khaldūn (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 130

[30]Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, An Introduction to History, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: 1969), p. 30.

[31]Arnold, The Caliphate, p. 125.

[32]The Encyclopedia of Islam, 4:139.

CHAPTER V

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

It might be well to look at the different views on succession before discussing the succession of the orthodox Caliphs. These views on succession are better known to us from theoretical discussion than actual cases. Most of these views would seem to have taken shape before or soon after the momentous date which marked the transfer of power from the Umayyads to the Abbasids.

ORTHODOX VIEWS ON SUCCESSION

Concerning the religious foundations of the Islamic state and the environment in which it grew, one must ask a question: is the authority of the ruler derived from God or from the people?

Unlike the Christians, Muslim writers did not evolve any political theory which would enable us to establish with certainty whether authority emanates from God or the community of believers. However, they reached a few principles which point to a divine source of authority. The Imamate is made obligatory by the religious law and not by reason;[1] it must be one and indivisible; and it must be held by a sole Imam who, once installed, is to be obeyed by all Muslims at

all times, and disobedience to him is equivalent to disobedience to God.[2] This pledge of complete disobedience is embodied in an oath of allegiance (Bayᶜah) which we will discuss.

The orthodox writers emphasize the humanity of the ruler in that he need not be the best man in the community, and can be deposed in case of physical and mental defects or moral turpitude.[3] They do not, on the other hand, regard the Imamate as a mundane institution. However, the divine meaning of the Imamate which is reminiscent of the ancient situation in the Middle East is played down by our principal writers. They have an explanation for the necessity of the existence of the Imamate. Ibn Hazim believes if one permitted the existence of more than one Imam, it would not be possible to restrict the number of Imams to a reasonably small number, but one would have to permit the possible existence of a great number of Imams which would lead to decentralized authority.[4] Al-Jahiz refuses the idea of more than one Imam and concludes that if there is more than one Imam, there can be no peace.[5]

Since orthodox Islam (Ahl al-Sunah Wa-al-Jama'ah) laid little stress upon a divine source for authority for the Imamate, it also ruled out any divine elements in the process of its transmission. The custom of hereditary succession was accepted, but it did not supersede the requirement of election. Any succession, in order to be valid,

required confirmation by the notables and the community. The historical survey will amply illustrate this principle.

The theory of succession revolves around three pivotal concerns: the delegation of power, the oath of allegiance, and the heir apparent.

The Delegation of Power

While sectarian groups stress the claim to the Caliphate rather than the means of its attainment, orthodox Islam was taught by its long experience with power politics to consider those means, even if it did not consider them to be of central importance. In this connection, Muslim scholars do not speak of any codified constitutional theory, but of trends and past customs.[6] The procedures of succession supposedly employed in the selection of the first four Caliphs became precedents for later orthodox Muslims who held these procedures to be valid and binding. To them the conduct and behavior of the orthodox Caliphs were a model and point of departure in the consideration of a new appointment. A body of traditions emerged from their activities, deeds, and sayings which served as a sort of unwritten constitution.

Al-Mawardi states that the Imamate can be arrived at in two ways: (1) selection by agreement of notables of the community (in'iqād bi-ikhtiyar ahl al-hall Wa-l' aqd)[7] and (2) nomination by a predecessor (bi-'adh manqablahu).[8]

The selection by agreement belongs to a group know as the people of the Imamate (ahl al-Immamah), the electors

(ahl al-Ikhtiyār),[9] or those who unite and tie (ahl al-Hall Wa-l-'aqd). This refers originally to the companions of the Prophet, but actually is applied to anyone who had knowledge of the law, and was known for his probity and competence, the main prerequisites.[10] Rashīd Ridā uses this designation, for all the representatives of the Islamic community place their entire trust in them.[11] On the other hand, the prerogative of nomination belongs to the Caliph.

Selection by the Notables of the Community. The electors are the ones who consider the requirements of eligible candidates and appoint the one with the best qualifications. They must know the candidate personally and by name.[12] Their decision is final even if they elect an "inferior" (mafdūl) member of the Muslim community and discover a superior (afdal) personality later. They are also empowered to select an Imam if the ruling Imam is taken prisoner by polytheists with no hope of return,[13] or if two persons are proclaimed Caliphs with no proof of which one was proclaimed first. It is up to the electors in such cases to choose one of them or depose both of them and select someone else.[14] They also have the power to take someone out of the Caliphate if he makes changes in a negative way after he has been nominated as the ruling Caliph. On the other hand, if the nominee has demonstrated good works since his nomination to the succession, they have the right to endorse his nomination.

Finally, they are empowered to decide cases in which the Caliph had nominated two sons without having made any stipulation of precedence.[15]

This elite of notables and excellent people may have existed at one time or another, but its status as a group was not defined. There is no indication that a procedure existed whereby the selection of electors was undertaken. In the Umayyad and the Abbasid Caliphate, there was always a group of notables made up of the relatives of the Caliphs, their army commanders, the governors of the provinces, and the head of the ministries. Then there were judges, theologians who enjoyed prominence in political matters. All these people, however, were dependent on the courts of their Caliphs, and they were not organized or independent so that they could be expected to discharge the function of selection in the sense in which the theory assumed.

There are different opinions as to the number of the electors. One school of thought maintains that the election of a Caliph is valid only with the concurrence of all the ahl al-Hall Wa-al-'aqd; others maintain that the concurrence of five of them is the minimum requirement, while still other groups maintain that the choice of three, two, and even one single elector is sufficient for making an election valid. It is evident that the theory of selection by general agreement of the notables permits broad latitude as to the qualifications, functions, and number of the electors.

While the theory conforms to an ideal concept of universal suffrage which could not have been derived from actual cases, it was at the same time played down by writers on the subject to conform to the practice of their own time whereby the Caliph was given the prerogative of deciding and choosing his successor as he saw fit. The basis of contention is that the Caliph's legal decisions have more weight than any decisions coming from a single person or a group of persons.[16] The Caliph's right of precedence seems to antedate the formulation of the theory itself. In consequence, jurists, theologians, and political writers had yielded--and understandably so--to the practice prevalent at that time.[17] This is attested to by the latitude of the theory and its many allowances which obscured the very essence of what the theory was intended to be. Aware as they were of the practice of hereditary succession having become deeply rooted from the time of the Umayyads onward, it would seem that writers compromised the broader concept of theory with actual practice, but without wanting to relegate it to a minor place in the process of the transmission of power.[18]

It is also evident that an elector, according to consensus, could be any upright Muslim, and might not necessarily belong to a duly elected assembly. Again there is no indication that an elector ever discharged his duty as a "voter" within the established assembly or outside it. Therefore, the absence of such an assembly that would have

had the function of check and balance of power most certainly led to absolutism, gradual weakness, and eventual dissolution of the Caliphate. The very fact that the concentration of power remained in the hands of the Caliph, and that it often changed hands without due process of law, and was held by powerful elements of the Empire who generally misused it, contributed to a state of tyranny and absolutism.[19]

It is also interesting to note that the conception of an electorate as having the prerogatives of impeachment, dismissal, and so on is identical with that of election.[20] Election implied universal suffrage, in which the electors had free choice. In practice, however, the election had become invariably a confirmation by the people at large of selections already made, either by the Caliph himself or by the powerful elements of the Empire. Therefore, the merit of the theory does not lie in whether or not the theory had been put into practice, but in its significance as conforming to a Muslim ideal of election whereby all eligible citizens of the Islamic community may have an equal opportunity to freely participate in the election of the head of the community.

Nomination by the Caliph. The reduction of the number of electors to elect one Caliph brings us to the matter of nomination of a Caliph by the Caliph himself. In this case, the selection process became a contract between two

individuals. The Caliph was the only person with the power of entering into such a contract (ʿahd).[21] He was legally empowered to select his successor during his lifetime by writing a document appointing a nominee of his choice. The contract itself was made on behalf of the Muslims, and both parties--the Muslim community and the nominee--pledged themselves to live up to it.

The conclusion of the contract by the Caliph and its subsequent confirmation by the community as a whole with an oath of allegiance (bayʿah) of a sacrosanct character constituted what was called Wilayat al-ʿahd. The nominee himself was called Wali-al-A'hd.[22] We do not exactly know when the Muslims coined this term. The two terms Wali and 'ahl al-Wilayah have many meanings. The term Wali occurs several times in the Quran with different meanings: "protecting friend," "near relative,"[23] and "friends of God."[24] It is applied to God himself,[25] to be a friend of Satan,[26] to the believers to be friends to unbelievers,[27] and enemies of God.[28] It once occurs meaning "successor": "Verily I have become afraid of the next kin to come after me and my wife is barren, so give me from an heir as from thyself."[29] From this Quaranic basis Wali was taken by some Caliphs[30] as meaning successor and applied to the Wali al 'ahd, but without more evidence we cannot be sure that the use of the term Wali al 'ahd is derived from this Quranic passage.

The substantive Wilayah occurs only twice, meaning "protection"[31] and "relationship." Later on it was taken as a general term for any conferral of power and high office.

ʿAhd also occurs in the Quran many times as "covenant"[32] and as a synonym of the mithāq (covenant) by which God bound the Israelites and the believers. Such a contract is identical in character with the oath of allegiance which the Prophet received from early believers. Thus Wilayah al A'hd would seem to mean "Conferral of the Covenant," and Wali al-'ahd is the one upon whom the covenant is conferred.[33] Some writers think it appears the Caliph himself could have been called Wali al-Ahd. For them the usage of Khilafah and Wilayat al ʿahd is the same. The transfer of the term to the heir apparent may possibly imply that, as a result of his nomination, the heir apparent acquired a nominal tenure of office, while actual or titular tenure remained in the hands of the ruling Caliph.

From a juridical point of view, the contracts of nomination were so binding even the Caliph himself was not permitted to revoke them[34] or give precedence to anyone else. The jurists accepted this custom of nomination by contract as a valid procedure on the ground that the general agreement (ijma') agreed upon its permissibility and soundness. Ibn Khaldūn explains it in the following terms:

> Since the very nature of the Imamate is in the protection of the interests of the community in religious

> and secular affairs, and since the Caliph is their protector (Wali) and guardian during his lifetime in this respect, it follows that he also is to protect them after his death by nominating for them a person who would take charge of their affairs in the same manner they had respected him. This is acknowledged by law and the general consensus concerning its permissibility and legality.[35]

The Caliph had a right to nominate anyone of his choice provided that, in the case of nominating his son or brother as his successor,[36] he was prompted not by family feeling or practice but by a sincere desire to serve the well-being of the community.[37]

Al-Mawardi does not express a preference for either election or nomination. The theologian and jurist ibn Hazim criticizes the procedure of election whether arrived at by the general agreement (ijma') of the notables of the community, by a council consisting of five or less, or by the inhabitants of the capital of the Empire. Ibn Hazim says that election of a successor by general consensus should take place only in the center of the state where the Caliph is, and not in all countries, because of the great distance which separates them.[38] Some jurists said an election by five members of a council based on the design of Umar was required.[39] Umar made any one of them eligible, and the five were candidates and electors at the same time. In appointing the ahl ash-Shura, Umar did not say that the election as such would have been invalid if it had been carried out by less or more than five. This stipulation, which had been made by Umar, establishes no precedent for the

number of electors. Ibn Hazim also criticized the selection of a successor by the inhabitants of the capital of the Empire because of the inherent danger that they might arrogate this privilege to the exclusion of the rest of the Islamic community. In conclusion, he expresses his idea on nomination as follows:

> We prefer this procedure and reject all the rest because it is the only one which guarantees the continuity of authority, the good administration of the state, and the perfect order of the Islamic community. Only with this procedure can quarrel and revolution, which are detrimental to political unity, be avoided.[40]

The sanction of nomination by jurists and theologians came from the belief that the Caliph's decisions were more effective than those of any other Muslim, and that his choice carried more weight than theirs. Another concept was that of the alleged works of the Prophet put to work in order to show the legality of the procedure of nomination. It had been asserted as a fact that Abu-Bakr was chosen by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to conduct the prayer, and this was taken as implicit nomination. It is even asserted by Ibn Hazim that the Prophet[41] did in fact nominate Abu-Bakr to succeed him. Ibn Hazim is almost the only one to make such a claim. Other theologians believe that the choice of Abu-Bakr for the prayer by the Prophet was a nomination for the Caliphate by implication. As some Muslims said, "If the Prophet nominated him for the lesser Imamate (the prayer leader), we should nominate him for the greater Imamate (the Caliphate)."[42] In the matter of the order of

succession of the first four Caliphs, the Prophet's position concerning it was derived from the case when the Prophet appointed Zayd b. Haritha as commander of the army and Abdullah ibn Rawaha to replace him if he were killed. Beyond that, it would be up to the Muslims to choose anyone they wanted. Al-Mawardi, among other theologians, thought that if the Prophet made this stipulation of priority, then it was right to follow it for the Caliphate.

The method of nomination is associated with the orthodox Caliphs. Umar was nominated by Abu-Bakr, but Umar himself was unable to choose between Ali, Othman, and Sa'ad.[43] He nominated an Electoral Council of six persons to choose one from among themselves. He refused to put his son Abdullah on this council because he did not want him to take responsibility for the Caliphate after his death. Ibn Khaldūn gave his personal view on the procedure of nomination. He justified Mu'awiya for nomination and his son Yazid as heir apparent as a psychological move and a political expediency. He said if Mu'āwiyah left the matter of succession in the hands of the Muslim community, the powerful Umayyads would not be satisfied and this would then lead to the dissolution of the Empire. Ibn Khaldūn thought that the Caliphs after the orthodox Caliphs were not to be blamed for the nomination of their sons and brothers, because they lived in different circumstances than those of the orthodox Caliphs.[44]

We can draw certain conclusions about the nomination from these different views of Muslim theologians and historians. All of them were influenced by the political situation of their time. The practice of each period gave more validity to the procedure itself. Moreover, the Umayyads who produced the method of nomination could not be considered on an equal level as that of the orthodox Caliphs. Some historians believe that the Muslims of the early Caliphate followed the old Arab custom of electing leaders in which they would elect an elder in the group for his wisdom and experience.[45] This was only one factor for the Muslims in choosing a Caliph. The main consideration was the man's religious dignity, his relationship with the Prophet, and his deeds for the community.

On the other hand, the nomination through hereditary line was introduced and developed by the Umayyads. Mu'āwiya was the first Caliph to nominate his son (Yazīd). Some Muslim historians believe this was done as a hold over from tribal customary practice, but in fact the old Arab custom was actually to choose an elder of the tribe, even if he were not related to the dead leader. Mu'āwiya campaigned for his son Yazīd for about seven years. He used political persuasion, however, to achieve his goal. His method was then used by his successors, and their use of nomination established it as the only procedure for determining succession to the Caliphate. The old practice of election was

never used again. The Caliphate even went to minors of whose good qualities and ability to rule nothing could be predicted. Such nominations were always criticized by many people in Umayyad and Abbāsid times. Some minors would resign and the matter of their minor age was brought to bear in the declaration of resignation.[46]

The custom of willing the Caliphate by means of contract (ʿahd) or will (Wasiyah) was also introduced by the Umayyads. The bayʿah given to a Caliph during the lifetime of the ruling Caliph was considered a misuse of the principle of the Imamate. Gradually the term bayʿah became related to the nomination and connected with it, and lost its original meaning.[47]

The Abbāsids used the same method of determining succession to the rule. Their nomination was simple at first. Later it became official and complex. They used to make ʿAhd for two and three successors. They would take signatures of many witnesses for the ʿAhd. Then they celebrated the bayʿah between the Caliph, the nominee, and the people of the capital.[48] Furthermore, the documents of nomination were usually publicized. They were given religious sanction by being hung on the walls of the Ka'bah.[49] These tendencies did not protect the nomination from disrespect at times.

The Oath of Allegiance

When the new Caliph succeeded to the rule, whether by nomination or election, the people were required to submit oaths of allegiance to him. This oath of allegiance is what has been known in Muslim history as bayʿah. This bayʿah is rendered to the Caliph by the notables (bayat al-khassah) and by the whole community (baʿyat al-Āmmah). Then the Caliph would announce his allegiance to the book (the Quran) and the Sunah of the Prophet, and the people would declare their submission to him.[50] All Muslims were required to render Bayʿah, and those who refused to do so did not recognize the Caliph. The Caliph would force them to submit the Bayʿah. Breaking it constitued an apostasy of dreadful consequences in this life and the hereafter.

Bayʿah had a religious connotation. It was used in the Quran as a contract between a seller and a buyer. This was the meaning of the word for pre-Islamic Arabs. In Islam it was first used when a group from al-Auss wa al-Khazrag, the people of Medina came to the Prophet and made a treaty with him. This was known in Islamic history as Bay'at al Aqab'ah al aūlla (the First Aqaba Treaty). The next year a large number of members of the two tribes--al-Auss wa al-Khazrag--came to Mecca. They agreed that they would welcome the Prophet to their city, and that they would offer him full protection. This bargain (Bayʿah) was known as Bayʿat al Aqab'ah al Thanyah (the Second Aqaba Treaty).

God considered this allegiance to the Prophet as an allegiance to him:

> Verily those who swear allegiance to thee, swear allegiance really to Allah, the hand of Allah is above their hands so whoever breaks faith, to his own hurt he breaks it, and to those who fulfill what they have pledged to Allah, he will one day give a mighty reward.[51]

The reference to Bay'ah is also in the tradition. The Prophet said that whoever dies without having rendered the oath of allegiance dies like the people of pre-Islamic time (Jahilyah). In connecting Bay'ah to the Caliphate and connecting the Caliphate to the religion, the Bay'ah became very important to the Caliphate. If Bay'ah were not completely done there would be no succession to the seat of the Caliphate. Any break in its continuity would mean war until every group or individual came to submit his allegiance to the Caliph. All Caliphs wanted to receive the Bay'ah from the people of their capitals as well as the other metropolises. If there were no Bay'ah, the Caliphate would not be on solid ground legally.

In connection with the Caliphate, the Bay'ah had become a necessary formality without which the Caliphate could never be considered as being established on legal ground. It was required of all Muslims without any regard to their rank, and was universal and obligatory. It had the character of election by the Muslim community which had a free choice to express its loyalty and obedience to authority. In this sense it was the voluntary expression of all

ahl-Hall Wal-aqd. In practice, however, the Bay'ah as a voluntary expression presuming free choice to vote fell short of this connotation. The use of nomination through hereditary lines prevented any free choice. Some historians say they have evidence showing that indirect means such as intimidation, promise of employment, and giving of money were used to secure the Bayᶜah. They add that whenever these methods failed, force was used.[52]

The Bayᶜah's character was to be lasting during the lifetime of the Caliph to whom it was rendered, but sometimes the Bayᶜah was broken. One of these broken Bayᶜahs was that of the revolution of the Egyptians against Uthman ibn Affan in 656. This was not the only breaking of the Bay'ah of a Caliph by the people. The Bayᶜah had been broken several times during the orthodox, the Umayyad, and the Abbasid Caliphates.

The Bayᶜah was taken during the nomination ceremonies. The ceremonies usually took place in the capital and each province of the Empire, and they were held in the main mosque or sometimes in the Caliph's palace.[53] In case of the death of a Caliph and the nominee's absence, the ceremony would take place and a messenger would be sent to inform him. The ceremonies were very simple at first. The Caliph would go to the big mosque and the public would come to submit their oath of allegiance. In Abbasid times the ceremony became complicated. It had to be attended by a

relative of the Caliph, the commanders of the army, vizīrs, jurists, and all high-ranking officials. This private ceremony was followed by another for the public (al Raʿayah).

The conditions of the Bayʿah are like those of the Imamate itself.[54] There was also a form for saying the Bayʿah. For example, they used to say simply, "I render the oath of allegiance," although it became more elaborate afterwards. Also it was different from one time to another. Some followed it by saying, "in which God and his messenger are witnesses."[55] This would be followed by kissing the Caliph's hand.[56]

The Heir Apparent

The heir apparent was not known to the orthodox Caliphs. None of the orthodox Caliphs nominated an heir apparent from his own family. Umar refused to nominate his son Abdullah as his successor or even one among other members of the consultation council previously appointed by him. This practice dated from the time of Muʿāwiya, who nominated his son as his heir apparent (Wali al-ʿAhd). This marks a pronounced change in the history of the Islamic Caliphate, which from that time switched to a monarchy under the title of Caliphate, which functioned as the ruling institution. The earlier Umayyad Caliphs required the oath of allegiance for only one heir apparent, but later Caliphs nominated two and three heirs apparent. This nomination of

the heir apparent became a major issue in the history of the Caliphate. Some Caliphs, after coming to the throne, tried to make their sons the heir apparent instead of the one nominated by the Caliph before them. The Abbāsid Caliph al-Mansūr was determined to force his nephew Isā b. Musa, who was the heir apparent, to relinquish his claim to the throne in favor of al-Mahdī. Al-Mansūr could not do that without authorization (Fatwa) from the theologians. Isā was then forced to become second in line to the throne after al-Mahdī. When al-Mahdī became Caliph, he nominated his sons al-Hadi and al-Rashid. When al-Rashid succeeded him to be a Caliph, he nominated his sons al-Amin and al-Mamūn. Some historians believe that after al-Mamūn the matter of succession to the Caliphate went out of the hands of the Caliphs.

The heir apparent did not have to be the son of the Caliph, but the Caliphs usually nominated one or more sons as heir apparent. It was usually the elder sons who succeeded them. The heir apparent would be nominated the same way a Caliph was nominated. On the other hand, the concept of Qurayshite descent played a significant role in assignment of the heir apparent. This was also true in the choice of the Caliph himself. The idea of Qurayshite descent began with the election of Abu-Bakr. Some of the later Abbāsid heirs apparent had slave mothers. They would nominate a successor from a free mother. The nomination of the

heir apparent (Walī al-ʿAhd) was done throughout the Empire by an oath of allegiance rendered to the Caliph and the heir apparent. After the oath of allegiance was rendered to the heir apparent, his name would be mentioned in the Friday sermon (Khutbat al-Jum'ah), and his name was printed on coins. His title was heir apparent and Amir.[57] He lived in a separate palace from that of the Caliph. He also served as "vice-Caliph" if the Caliph himself were away from the capital. Some heirs apparent had enough power to conflict with the Caliph's power.

The heir apparent was called by the title (laqab) given to him, or Amir. The surname (laqab) of the Abbāsid Caliph al-Mahdi (The Rightly Guided One) presumably was coined in order to counteract contemporary claims of the Hasanid branch of the Alids. The Hasanid Muhammad was impelled to lead a life of concealment because of his apparent legitimacy as a potential Wali al-ʿAhd. His followers hoped that he would soon come forth and become a Caliph of the Muslims. There was a Hadith (a saying of the Prophet) that the Mahdi would have the same name as the Prophet Muhammad b. Abdullah. According to this Hadith, however, the son of the Caliph al-Mansūr was as qualified as the Hasanids to benefit from this Hadith. His name was Abdullah and his son's name was Muhammad. When al-Mansūr nominated him, he gave him the title al-Mahdi.

The heir apparent was second in line to the Caliph, but he was given his own special power. The position of the heir apparent and his relation to the Caliph were discussed by Muslim theologians. Al-Mawardi concluded that once the Caliph willed the Caliphate to an eligible candidate, the nomination was subject to the acceptance of the nominee (al-Muwallā). Also, he thought that once the Caliph had nominated someone as heir apparent he had no right to change that nominee, since it had been done for the benefit of the Muslims and their Empire. The heir apparent's resignation was not confirmed until the Caliph himself accepted it. Finally, al-Mawardi thought the heir apparent had no right to nominate his successor or to give the title to anyone else.[58]

In the Umayyad Caliphate, the heir apparent was given a province to rule. This was a preliminary test of his capacity to rule. This situation sometimes led to a conflict of powers, especially in cases of more than one heir apparent.

From the time of his nomination as heir apparent to the time of his succession to the Caliphate, the heir apparent educated himself and obtained experience as a ruler. The heir apparent was given a good tutor and was educated in Hadith, the Quran, history, geography, and most of the knowledge of the time.[59]

SECTARIAN VIEWS ON SUCCESSION

In the first half of this chapter we discussed the orthodox (ahl al-Sunah Wa-al-Jama'ah) view of the succession to the Caliphate, but other current views must be considered also. These are the views of the sectarian, or non-orthodox sects (al-Firaqal-Islamiyyah) who did not have actual practice ruling as did the orthodox sect, but they have their own particular ideas on Imamate and the matter of succession to it.

The biggest and most important of these sects is the Shi'ah, who have a completely different view on the Imamate than that of the Sunah. The Shi'ah consider the Imamate is a divine right for Ali bin Abi-Talib and his sons. They believe that the Prophet appointed Ali as his successor. It is natural for any head of an institution such as the principal of a school, if he will be absent even for a few hours, to select someone to stand in for him.

In Islam also, whenever a city or a village fell into Muslim hands, the Prophet would immediately appoint a governor to manage their affairs. In every war or expedition of Jihad, the Prophet would appoint several leaders, ranked in order of succession. In the War of Mū'tah he appointed four leaders. If the first one was killed, the second would replace him; and if the second was killed, the third would come; and so on.[60]

In the problem of succession, the Prophet never left Medina without appointing a representative to take his place. Even when he migrated from Mecca to Medina, he left Ali behind him to manage his personal affairs and to return what had been entrusted to him to the people. Thus, for these reasons, the Shi'ah believe that the Prophet must have appointed a successor in the leadership of the Muslim community. That successor was Ali bin Abi-Talib, and they cite several Hadiths as proof (the Prophet's sayings and acts). For example, the Shi'ah say that the Prophet, in his early days, called his close relatives and told them clearly that whoever accepted his religion would become his successor and inheritor. Ali was the first to step forth and embrace Islam. Ali then accepted Islam and the Prophet thus fulfilled his promise.[61] But for the Shi'ah, the main evidence for Ali's legitimacy as successor to the Prophet is the event of "Ghadir Khumm," when the Prophet, returning from Mecca to Medina in his last pilgrimage, at a site called Ghadir Khumm, chose Ali as his successor before the great crowd which was accompanying him.[62] The Shi'ah call this the General Guardianship (Walayat-i-'ammah), because the Prophet made Ali the guardian (Wali) of Muslims like himself.

In the Shi'ite theological literature, there are also traditions to indicate the procedure of determining a successor to the Prophet (Imam), such as the Hadiths of Ghadir,

Safin, Thaqalayn, Hagg, Manzilah, D'awt-il-'ashirah-il-agrabīn and others. Some of these Hadiths were accepted by Sunism as Hadiths, but they were interpreted by each group differently. While the Shi'ah saw these Hadiths as indications concerning the succession to the Imamate, the Sunah did not see it that way.

The Shi'ites believe that the Imamate should be for Ali and inheritance for his descendants. They reject the principal of election which had been used in choosing the orthodox Caliphs. According to the Shi'ite doctrine, each Imam has superhuman qualities. They believe also in the infallibility (ʿismah) of the Imams, that the superhuman quality of the Imam would raise him above the rest of humankind, and that his decisions are absolute and final.[63]

The Khawarij appeared as a result of the war between Ali and Mu'awiyah in 657. They carried a political view of the Imamate which reflected their hatred of the political atmosphere at that time. The Kharijites' theory of the Imamate was the most radical one among other theories. They rejected the idea of the Qurayshite or Alid descent, believing that the Imam could be any Muslim, Arab, Persian, free man, or slave.

They thought that the existence of the Imam was not a religious duty. Therefore, they believed an Imam was not necessary for Muslims, if they could manage their civil administration without one.[64] The Khawarij did not like the

idea of inheritance. They thought election was the best way to choose the Caliph. Thus, they approved the Caliphate of Abu-Bakr and Umar, and also that of Ali until he accepted the arbitration (atahkiem),[65] after which they no longer recognized his Caliphate.

The Shi'ah and the Khawarij are the only sectarian sects who achieved little success in establishing independent political regimes. In addition to them, there are other sectarian groups such as the Mu'tazilah and the Murji'ah who had different views on the Imamate, but they were much less numerous and never succeeded in holding any political organization.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Abu al-Hassan Ali bin Muhammad al-Mawardi, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, ed. R. Enger (Bonn: Conistitutiones Politica, 1853), p. 3.

[2]Muhammad al-Khudari, Itmam al-Wafa fi-Sirat al-Khulafa (Cairo: Manshurat al-'Asr al-Hadith, 1973), p. 123.

[3]al-Mawardi, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, p. 25.

[4]al-Andalusi ibn Hazim, al-Fasl-fial-Milal Waal-Ahwa Waal Nihal (Cairo: Makhbat Muhammad Ali Sabih, 1964), 4:9.

[5]Abu 'Uthman 'Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz, Ras'ail al-Jahiz, ed. Hassan as-Sandubi (Cairo: 1933), p. 249.

[6]Hilal ibn al-Muhssin al-Sabi, Rusum Dar al-Khilafah (Baghdad: 1964), p. 24.

[7]al-Mawardi, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, p. 6.

[8]Ibid., p. 12.

[9]They can elect a Caliph, but they are not themselves eligible for the Imamate.

[10]al-Mawardi, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, p. 5.

[11]Muhammad Rashied Ridā, al-Khilafa Wa-l-Imamah al-Kubra (Cairo: 1923), p. 27.

[12]al-Suyūtī, Tariekh al-Khūlafa, p. 28.

[13]al-Mawardi, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, p. 31

[14]al-Yailā Muhammad ibn Husayn al-Farrā, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah (Cairo: Maktbat Mustfa al-Halabi, 1957), p. 102.

[15]Ibid., p. 108.

[16]Ibid., p. 18.

[17]Ibid., p. 34.

[18]Abu Muhammad Abdulah ibn Qutaybah, al-Imamah Wa-al-Siyasah (Cairo: 1967), p. 21

[19]al-Suyūtī, Tariekh al-Khūlafa, p. 12.

[20]ibn Hazim, al-Fasl-fial-Milal Wa al-Nihal, p. 23.

[21]al-Farrā, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, p. 62.

[22]Ibrahim al-'Adwai, al-Nuzūm al-Islamyah (Cairo: Maktbat al-Anglu, 1972), p. 32.

[23]Yusuf, The Glorious Quran, Surah 17, Verse 59.

[24]Ibid., Surah 10, Verse 63.

[25]Ibid., Surah 2, Verse 258.

[26]Ibid., Surah 19, Verse 45.

[27]Ibid., Surah 4, Verse 144.

[28]Ibid., Surah 4, Verse 13.

[29]Ibid., Surah 19, Verse 5.

[30]al-Farrā, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, p. 42.

[31]Yusuf, The Glorious Quran, Surah 18, Verse 42.

[32]Ibid., Surah 3, Verse 70.

[33]ibn Hazim, al-Fasl-fial-Milal Wa al-Nihal, 4:72.

[34]Ibid., p. 75.

[35]ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnany, 1956), p. 427.

[36]ibn Hazim, al-Fasl-fial-Milal Wa al-Ahwa Wa al Nihal, p. 27.

[37]ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, p. 426

[38]ibn Hazim, al-Fasl-fial-Milal Wa al-Ahwa Wa al Nihal, 5:30.

[39]Muhammad al-Rayyis, al-Islam Wa-al-Khilafah fi-al-'Asir al Hadith (Cairo: Manshūrat al-Asir al-Hadieth, 1973), p. 81

[40]ibn Hazim, al-Fasl-fial-Milal Wa al-Ahwa Wa al Nihal, p. 31.

[41]Ibid.

[42]al-Najjar, al-Khūlafa al-Rashdūn, p. 18.

[43]Ibid., p. 21.

[44]ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, p. 27.

[45]al-Kharbutlī, al-Islam Wa-al-Khilafa, p. 22

[46]al-Suyūtī, Tariekh al-Khūlafa, p. 54.

[47]ibn Hazim, al-Fasl-fial-Milal Wa al-Ahwa Wa al Nihal, p. 32.

[48]Ahmad bin Abdulah al-Qalqashandi, Ma'thir al-inafah fi-Ma'alim al-Khilafah (Kuwait: 1964), p. 23.

[49]ibn Hazim, al-Fasl-fial-Milal Wa al-Ahwa Wa al Nihal, p. 123.

[50]al-Qalqashandi, Ma'thir al-inafah fi-Ma'alim al-Khilafah, p. 18.

[51]Yusuf, The Glorious Quran, Surah 48, Verse 10.

[52]Ali Abd al-Raziq, al-Islam Wa-Usul al-Hūkum (Beirut: Dar al-Hayat, 1966), p. 199.

[53]al-Qalqashandi, Ma'thir al-inafah fi-Ma'alim al-Khilafah, p. 59.

[54]The conditions of the Imamate are that the nominee must be adult, wise, healthy, with some religious knowledge and a Qurayshite.

[55]al-Qalqashandi, Ma'thir al-inafah fi-Ma'alim al-Khilafah, p. 58.

[56]ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqadimah, p. 147.

[57]al-Sabī, Rūsum Dar al-Khilafah, p. 61

[58]al-Mawardi, al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, pp. 14, 21.

[59]al-Sabī, Rūsum Dar al-Khilafah, p. 69.

[60]Muhammad Husayn al-Tabtābā'i Shia'ite Islam, trans. Seyyed Hossien Nasir (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), p. 174.

[61]Ibid., p. 40.

[62]Hashim Ma'aruff al-Husayni, al-Shi'ah bayn al-Ash'ariyah Wa-al-Mu'atazilah (Beirut: 1964), p. 30.

[63]Thomas, The Caliphate, p. 186.

[64]Ibid., p. 188.

[65]al-Mas'ūdī, Muruij al-Dhab-Wa-Ma'adin al-Jawhar, 3:34.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRE-ISLAMIC PRACTICE OF SUCCESSION

In pre-Islamic Arabia there was no real political life or political institutions except in the southern part of the peninsula, while the rest of the Middle East had known complex political systems. Later Muslim administrations were based on these ancient models, and the Muslim Caliphs of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties were influenced by the old procedures of succession.

The ancient monarchs were self-appointed, either as a result of a military victory, leading to a foundation of a new state, Empire, or a displacement of a dynastry, leading to the coming of another one. It was considered important to keep the kingship in the same dynasty. The hereditary concept was the most popular form of succession in the ancient world, both as a preservative of continuity and as a way to avoid any crisis after the death of the king. The hereditary concept was almost the only procedure in the ancient Middle East. People never criticized it or tried to change it to a new one. The ruler had the right to choose any of his relatives, be he son, brother, or nephew, but more often than not it was the eldest son.

In Egypt the king (Pharaoh) was considered a god. The succession was never in any difficulty. The power would be transmitted from father to son automatically.[1] In Mesopotamia, a difference of opinion concerning succession occurred in the Mesopotamina pantheon. This struggle was depicted as continuing among their descendants, who at times contested the will of the ruling deity.

In the Assyrian version of the Epic of Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh seized power, then became king of Mesopotamia, but before that he was a hero. In the Sumerian version, his activities were undertaken on behalf of the gods and were subject to control by two assemblies, that of the elders and that of the militia. These two assemblies, which comprised the main deities, were responsible for the transmission of power. The king of a city was considered not only in myth but also in reality as appointed by the chief deity. He was the "tenant farmer," or Ensi, of the Sumerians.

In reality, the succession was more or less fixed, the "lease" on rulership descended from father to son within the same family, and lasted through several generations of his descendants. However, due to the lack of definite stipulations, crises were frequent. The last Assyrian kings, in order to prevent political unrest, appointed their own successors. The king had to ask the gods if they approved of the nomination of his son. It was not always the elder son who succeeded the father. Henri Frankfort provides us

with a translation of an account of Esarhadon's succession:

> I was the younger brother of my adult brothers [yet] my father who begat me exalted me in the assembly of my brothers at the command of Assur, Shamash, Marduk, Nebo, Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela, saying: "This one is my successor." He questioned Shamash and Adad through oracles. They replied to him in the affirmative, "It is he who should be thy successor." Honouring this important pronouncement, he called together the people of Assyria, great and small, as well as my brothers born in the eternal house. Before the gods Assur, Sin Shamash, Nebo Marduk, the God of Assyria, the God who inhabits heaven and earth, he made them swear to accept my primacy. In the month of Nisan, in a propitious day, according to the august will of the Gods, I entered gladly in the house of succession, the awesome palace of royal destinies.[2]

For the Sassanians in Persia, the succession to rule was hereditary. Any son of the "King of Kings" could be chosen as his successor. The elder one did not have any advantage as a possible successor. The succession was dependent on the power of the nominee, the stability of the state at that time, and the agreement of the clergy, who mediated between the king and the people. At one time they had the power to elect the king.

After the Sassanians took power from the Arsaads, the "King of Kings" nominated his successor, but only after the consent of the clergy, the military commanders, and the nobility was it finalized. The nobles were the first ones to ratify the nomination. In the fourth century, the power of kings became weak, and their influence in the matter of succession was not strong. After that time, the nobles played an influential part in the succession process. They had their own candidates upon the throne and they never

selected a powerful figure. The power of the nobles, therefore, became very great. Thus the kings were no longer in control as monarchs, and they could no longer choose their successors. The matter of succession came under the control of an election council made up of nobles, commanders, and high-ranking officials. If no agreement could be reached in the council, the chief priest would have the final say. The king became dependent upon the goodwill of the clergy, whom he tried to please. In the case of Yazdgard (399-420), the nobles and the clergy tried to prevent his son Bahram V from succeeding to the throne, but he succeeded with the help of King al-Mundhir of al Hira.[3] After Khusro's death in 579, the old rivalry between the nobility and the throne came to the fore again. Finally, in the last years of the Sassanians, just before they were defeated by the Muslims, numerous kings followed one another in quick succession.

The Byzantine history of succession is unclear. It was full of intrigues and revolutions. The Byzantines had views of their monarchical institutions which were far from the reality, but they tried to narrow the gap between theory and practice. In theory, the Byzantine Empire was "divinely" ruled and its rulers were chosen by divine power. The government had a divine universal mission. The emperors were also divine: one God in heaven and one God on earth.[4]

When it came to practice, this theory was in conflict with the prevailing power politics.

At first the Byzantines used the Roman process of succession. The emperor would choose one of his relatives--son, brother, or sometimes an adopted son. If the emperor adopted a child, he could nominate him as his successor. This theory, however, did not allow the Byzantines a long-lived dynasty. The military carried some uneduated soldiers to the throne. The resulting instability was one of the chief aspects of the succession to the rule during the Byzantine history, even though hereditary succession had previously been a dependable and stable process.[5]

Now that we have looked at the practice of succession to rule among the ancient nations which preceded Islam, and later, as subject nations, influenced Muslim rule, we will look at the political experience of the Arabs, the population of Arabia, the home of Islam, which was more influential over the early Arab Muslims. As we have mentioned, the Arabs of pre-Islamic times did not have much political life or many political institutions except in Yemen. Yemen had a stable political life. The first major kingdoms in South Arabia were the Sabaean and the Minaean. Both kingdoms were begun as theocracies and ended as secular kingships.[6]

Mukarrib was the name of the Sabaean king. The Sabaean kings were priests too. In the second period of the Sabaean kingdom, the king was also a priest. Besides

the Sabaean and the Minaean kingdoms, two other states arose in South Arabia. These were Qatbān and Hadramout.[7] Then the entire region of South Arabia was under the Himyarite kingdom (115 B.C.--300 A.D.). The Himyarite kingdom was well-organized and it controlled the whole region until 275, when the Himyarites were attacked and overthrown by the Abyssinians.

The rest of Arabia was under tribal rule. The clan and the tribe were the only organizations in the political life of pre-Islamic Arabs.[8] They were divided into many large tribes, and each tribe had a number of clans. Each tribe had a chief (Sheikh al-Qabila) who would be elected by the tribal council on the basis of his age and experience. The members of the tribal council were usually the elder males of the tribe. The sheikh of the tribe decided the time of the migration of the tribe from one place to another and selected the best site for camping. He represented the tribe in negotiations with other tribes. The sheikh also functioned as a judge in the daily life of his fellow tribesmen. He declared war on other tribes and agreed on peace treaties with them. In time of war he was the commander of his tribe's army. If the sheikh died, the tribe elected another sheikh who usually was not from his family, but usually would be the eldest member of the tribal council (Majlis).

Pre-Islamic Arabia had many great tribes and these tribes were divided into many clans. All clans of the tribe were not related by blood.[9] Sometimes the tribes had people who were not from the tribe but had agreed to become members of the tribe and to obey its rules. This is akin to what a modern state does when it gives its citizenship to someone who is not a native of its land.

The Arab clan usually lived together in a camp (Hayy) of tents (Byūtt al-Sha'ar). Their numbers were different from one clan to the other. Sometimes their number reached as many of five hundred tents.[10] Each clan was an independent organization responsible for the security of its members and of its land. This depended on the unity and support of the members. Every person in Arabia was part of a tribe. A man without a tribe was an outlaw.[11] "ʿAsabiyya" was a fundamental aspect of their life. Clan and tribe solidarity was expressed in "ʿasabiyya," which ibn Khaldūn defines as the feeling of community based on blood relationship.[12]

These Arab customs and organizations influenced the practice of succession to the rule in Islam from the time of its earliest leaders, who had grown up in it and were very familiar with it.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Bishai, Islamic History, p. 30.

[2]Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 243-44.

[3]Ali Jawad, al-Mufassal fi-Tariekh al-Arab Gabil al-Islam (Baghdad: 1960), p. 235.

[4]D. A. Miller, The Byzantine Tradition (New York and London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), p. 40.

[5]Ibid., p. 42.

[6]Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 52.

[7]Ibid., p. 55.

[8]Evgenil Aleksandrovich Belyaev, Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages, trans. Adolphe Gourevitch (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969), p. 59.

[9]Ibid., p. 60.

[10]Ibid., p. 61.

[11]Ibid., p. 62.

[12]ibn Khaldūn, The Muqadimah, p. 233.

CHAPTER VII

THE ORTHODOX CALIPHS' PRACTICE OF SUCCESSION TO THE CALIPHATE

The practice of succession to the Caliphate which had been used by the orthodox Caliphs is what we are going to discuss in this chapter.

Most Orientalists believe that the orthodox practice of succession was influenced by the ancient ways of succession in the Middle East and by pre-Islamic practice. As Jacobsen says:

> Soon after Islam came into existence, it entered into close cultural contact with the older civilizations. The practice concerning succession among the nations which preceded Islam must be taken into consideration as possible prototypes of later Islamic practice. However, there is also the Arabian home of Islam and the political institutions of ancient Arabia, in particular of the Bedouin society of the central part of the Peninsula. The early leaders had grown up in it.[1]

Although the practice of succession to the Caliphate had been influenced by the ancient Arab custom of choosing a chief of a tribe, the fundamental basis upon which the Muslims depended in selecting their ruler (the Caliph) were different than those of pre-Islamic time.

Age was a major condition in choosing the new chief of a tribe. They believed their elders had better knowledge and experience in life. They chose their chiefs for their

bravery, or sometimes for their generosity. Also, the chiefdom of the Arab tribes always went to the wealthy families,[2] because of their wealth and power in the tribe. No election or oath of allegiance was known to the Arabs of the pre-Islamic era. The only pre-Islamic influence on the succession of the Caliph was the consultation (al-Shūra). The Muslims depended on this heavily in the selection of the orthodox Caliphs. Otherwise, the practice of succession to the Caliphate was Islamic in its nature and concept.

A man's contact with the Prophet and religious performance in behalf of Islam were the most important considerations for determining his eligibility to be Caliph, as we will see in the case of Abu-Bakr, the first of the orthodox Caliphs. Abu-Bakr was not the older person in the Muslim community at that time, nor was he from a powerful clan.

THE ELECTION OF ABU-BAKR AL-SIDDIQ

About a year before his death, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made a pilgrimage to Mecca. This is known as the Hajjat al Wida' (the farewell pilgrimage). It was revealed to him on the occasion of this pilgrimage that the religion of Islam had now attained perfection and that his time had drawn nigh. Two and a half months later, the Prophet was taken ill. Gradually he became too weak to lead

the public prayers, so he appointed Abu-Bakr as Imam (Guide) of the prayers.[3]

On June 8, 623 (12 of Rabi al-Awwal, 11 A.H.), the spirit of the Prophet took flight to the "Blessed Companionship on High." He had been on his deathbed for twelve days, but on that morning he felt better, so it was believed that the crisis was over and Abu-Bakr had gone to the Sunh where he lived. None of the Muslims were prepared to hear the news of his death. Umar took it as a piece of mischief by some hypocrite, and, sword in hand, he stood in the mosque to stop this disquieting. Abu-Bakr heard the news and came back to Medina and went straight to ʿĀʾshah's house. He found that the Prophet was dead. He kissed him on his forehead and said, "Sweet wert thou in life and sweet thou art in death."[4] Then he went out to the mosque and confirmed the death of the Prophet in these words: "Listen ye all! Whoever worshipped Muhammad, then certainly Muhammad is dead, and whoever worshipped God, let him know that God is everliving and he never dieth."[5] Then he quoted the following verse of the Quran: "And Muhammad is no more than a Messenger; all messengers before him have passed away."[6] This convinced the people that the news of the Prophet's death was true.

The Saqifah Meeting

Abu-Bakr and Umar were in the mosque when someone from among the Ansar came to tell them that the Ansar were

holding a meeting in "Saqifat Bani Sai'dah," a hall used as council room by the people of Medina, and about to choose an Amir (ruler) from among themselves.

It was a critical moment for Muslims. Without wasting time, Abu-Bakr and Umar, accompanied by Abu Ubeida, went quickly to the hall. On their arrival there one of the Ansar stood up and said, "It is by our good swords they have been able to plant the faith. The ruler of Medina shall be among ourselves."[7] Abu-Bakr, in reply, said that so far as service to the cause of the faith was concerned, there could be no two opinions about the Ansar. But the people of Arabia would not make any submission to anyone other than a Qurayshite, whom the Arabs had learned by long-established tradition to venerate and to whom belonged the Prophet himself.

Umar was about to speak, when Abu-Bakr told him to listen and told the Ansar, "Men of Medina, what you said in your own praise is true, and more than true, but in influence the Qurayshite is paramount, and to none but them will Arabs yield obedience." Then Habbab ibn al-Munther cried, "Let there be one Amir from us and one from them." Umar said, "There cannot be two Amirs for this will weaken the power of the Muslims." Then sharp words ensued. Habbab cried, "Do not hear him. Attend to me, for I am the well-rubbed palm stem. If they refuse, expel them from Medina." Umar told him, "Allah will destroy you"; Habbab returned the same

threat. Then Basheer ibn al-Numan from the Ansar supported the right of the Muhajirin (immigrants). Abu-Bakr pointed to Umar and Abu Ubeida and said, "You can choose one of them." Umar said Abu-Bakr was the logical successor to the Prophet because the Prophet had appointed him to lead the prayers: "Open your hand so that I may give you my allegiance." He did, then the other Muslims who were in the hall followed him. Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq was proclaimed successor of the Prophet of Allah (apostle of God.)[8]

It was due to the prudence of Abu-Bakr and Umar that a most threatening calamity was successfully averted. Without their fast action in reaching the hall (Saqifah), Islam would have found itself faced with formidable dissension within its own house, which would have ended in the total disruption of its power in this early age. Abu-Bakr and Umar had two important things to do. On the one hand, there was the duty of the funeral of the Prophet. On the other hand, there was the duty to save Islam from disruption in this critical moment. This call of Islamic duty was too urgent, too express, to permit any delay. It is not true at all, as claimed by some Orientalists, that this action taken by Abu-Bakr and Umar was a conspiracy on their part to rule the Muslim state.[9] Westerners are not familiar with persons like Abu-Bakr and Umar, who sacrificed their lives, their property, and their all to their

religion. Their strong belief in the hereafter would not allow them to look for any profit in this life.

The next day Abu-Bakr went to the mosque, where he received the public allegiance of all Muslims. Then he announced his principle of rulership which, if acted upon by the other Caliphs (Umayyads and Abbāsids), would have saved the worldwide empire of Islam from the decomposition and decay which overtook it in later times. Abu-Bakr started his speech by saying, "O People help me, if I am right. Set me right if I am in the wrong." In other words, he meant that the power to rule was in the hands of the people. It was their duty to render him every help, but if he acted wrongly he would expect the people to advise him. He declared the right of the citizen to criticize the ruler:

> The weak among you shall be strong in my eye till I have vindicated his just rights and the strong among you shall be weak in my eye till I have made him fulfill the obligations due from him. No nation abandoned Jihad [struggle] in the path of God.

And he concluded with these wise, beautiful words: "Obey me as long as I obey Allah [God] and his Prophet. In case I disobey God and his Prophet, I have no right to obedience from you."[10]

Abu-Bakr's election once and for all settled the important problem of succession to the Caliphate in Islam. It is under the constitution of Islam that the Caliph must be elected by the people. The manner of Abu-Bakr's election

became the guiding principle of Muslims in later years. The consultation, election, and the oath of allegiance were the important principles of succession to the Islamic Caliphate.

Another point concerning the matter of Abu-Bakr's succession to the Caliphate is Ali's oath of allegiance. There are several historical narratives dealing with this. One says that Ali and some other Hashimites refused to give the Bayʿah to Abu-Bakr, and stayed in Fatimah's house. Abu-Bakr and Umar, accompanied by some other Muslims, went to the house and called Ali to come and give his Bayʿah. Ali, rather than doing that, came with sword in hand and wrestled with Umar until the latter broke his sword. Then Fatimah, who was inside the house, protested loudly. So, Abu-Bakr, Umar, and their men left, and Ali and the other Hashimites gave them the oath of allegiance afterwards.[11]

There is also disagreement on the time it took Ali to give his Bayʿah to Abu-Bakr. While one of the narratives says it took him six months, the other says forty days.

In the history of al-Tabari we find two historical narratives showing that Ali did give the Bayʿah shortly after the Prophet's death with the other Muslims.[12] In fact, one of them says that Ali was in his house when someone came and told him that Abu-Bakr will sitting in the mosque to receive the Bayʿah. Ali then hastened to the mosque to give the Bayʿah to Abu-Bakr, even neglecting to dress completely.

Another historical narrative about the Bayah of Ali falls between these two. It says that when Abu-Bakr went to the mosque to receive the Bayah from the Muslims, he looked for Ali and al-Zubair, but he did not see them, so he called for them and when they came, he told them, "You are relatives of the Prophet but you are breaking the unity of the Muslims." Then Ali and al-Zubair gave the Bayah to Abu-Bakr.[13]

For the different historical narratives, we think the historians are mixing the matter of Ali's Bayah to Abu-Bakr and the problem of the land of "Fadak" which Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter, asked Abu-Bakr for her inheritance of the Prophet's part of the lands of Fadak and Khaybar. Abu-Bakr refused to give it to her because he had heard the Prophet saying, "We, the prophets never bequeath our property. What we leave behind is for almsgiving." Fatimah was consequently angry with Abu-Bakr, as was Ali. Fatimah's demand of Abu-Bakr constituted recognition of Abu-Bakr as a Caliph. Otherwise, if they had not submitted their Bayah to Abu-Bakr, they would not ask him for the Prophet's legacy. Other evidence for Ali's Bayah to Abu-Bakr shortly after the Prophet's death was Abu-Bakr's designating Ali as one of the four officers in charge of protecting Medina from tribal attack.[14] Abu-Bakr also consulted Ali in the critical matters of the state, as did Umar in his Caliphate. Also, Ali's attitude and struggle on behalf of Islam does

not make us think he would refuse to give the Bayah to Abu-Bakr.

There are some historians who imply that Abu-Bakr was not elected. As we showed above, Abu-Bakr was elected after the discussion of the public in the Saqifah of different points of view. Finally the choice fell by popular consent to Abu-Bakr. He was the right man for this great office. He unified the Muslims. He kept the Muslim state from decomposition. He started the Muslim conquest outside Arabia, and, above all, he brought Arabia back to Islam.

THE SUCCESSION OF UMAR IBN AL-KHATTAB

In the fall of 634, the Caliph Abu-Bakr fell sick; fever made him weak and prevented him from attending the public prayers in the mosque.[15] When the sickness took a serious turn, the Muslims worried about Abu-Bakr and their leadership. However, Abu-Bakr was most worried, for he remembered the crisis after the Prophet's death. He had already sent for the best companions (sahaba) to consult them in the matter of a suitable successor. His choice was fixed on Umar, but he was willing to confirm it by consultation with the others. He first consulted Abd al-Rahman ibn Auff, who praised Umar but said that he was stern. Abu-Bakr responded:

> That is because he saw me soft and tender-hearted. When he himself rules he will change much of what you say. I have watched him. If I was angry with someone

> he would be lenient in his behalf, then he would be stern.

Then Abu-Bakr consulted Uthman, who favored Umar, and said, "What was hidden in Umar is better than what we knew and there is no equal to him among us." Talha, one of the Prophet's counselors, had been asked by the Caliph Abu-Bakr about Umar as a successor. He told him, "We suffered much from Umar with you among us. What will you tell your God if he asks you, 'Who did you appoint over his people?'" Abu-Bakr became angry. He cried, "Are you threatening me with God? I will tell him, 'I appointed over your people the best among them.'"[16] Thereafter Abu-Bakr asked the opinions of Saʿīdibn Zaid, Usaid ibn Hudzair, and some other Muhajirin (emigrants) and Ansar (helpers).

The choice of all fell on Umar. When Abu-Bakr had finished his consultation, he called for Uthman to write the oath of nomination to Umar ibn al-Khattab as his successor. While it was being written he fainted; after he recovered he asked Uthman, "Whose name did you write?" He replied, "Umar." So Abu-Bakr was satisfied. Then he prayed, "O God, let me die a true believer, and make me join the blessed one on high." And he died and was buried near the Prophet on August 23, 634.[17]

Umar, as nominee, went to the mosque for the public swearing of allegiance. He then delivered a speech and announced his principal rules. The Muslim historians of the ninth and tenth centuries, who were influenced by their

time, think that the nomination took place as early as Abu-Bakr, the first Caliph. The nomination of Umar, as we saw, was different than that of the later Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs, who nominated their sons or brothers, who were not the best choices of the Muslim community of their time. Moreover, they did not ask the people for consultation. Thus, the people did not have any choice, while the early Muslims were given a free choice. Abu-Bakr said, "Obey me as long as I obey God and his Prophet. In case I disobey God and the Prophet I have no right to obedience from you." Umar once said the same thing. Abu-Bakr nominated Umar and as he announced to the Muslims, "It is not one of my kin." However, Abu-Bakr did not nominate him until after he had consulted most of the Muslims. He thought that was still not enough, so he declared to all Muslims assembled in the mosque that he had nominated Umar and asked if they would obey him. They all said, "Yes, we will obey."[18]

Umar was the only one among the orthodox Caliphs to receive complete agreement among Muslims on his succession to the Caliphate. Historians never mention any break for the Bayʿah to Umar by any person or group, while taking the oath of allegiance to him by Abu-Bakr in his final days or during his time as Caliph.

At the time of Abu-Bakr's death, the circumstances of the Muslim state were not less critical than those of the Prophet's death. The Arab apostasies had been brought back

to Islam but the Muslims were not sure about that, for the apostasies were new in their belief; it was possible at any time that they would apostasy again. The Muslim armies were spread all over, struggling against the Persians and Byzantines, the strongest empires at that time. So the Muslim state needed a strong leader to continue the struggle. There was not a stronger and more suitable person than Umar to be the Caliph and leader of the Muslims at the time.

Thus, Abu-Bakr chose him to be the Caliph and all Muslims agreed on that choice and all pledged their allegiance to him. Umar confirmed that he was the right person for the Caliphate.

Umar was the right person for the Caliphate. He was a real successor of the Prophet like Abu-Bakr and he faithfully walked in his precessors' footsteps. He was a great conqueror, great administrator, but a simple and humble person.

THE ELECTION OF UTHMAN IBN AFFAN

Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second Caliph, met his death at the hands of Abu-lulu (Firoz), a Persian slave of al-Mughirah who had brought him from Iraq. He came one day to the Caliph to complain that his master was taking two dirhams daily from him. The Caliph told him that was not excessive, which greatly incensed him. The following day

he went to the mosque while the Caliph was conducting the morning prayer and stabbed him. Umar directed Abdul Rahman ibn Auf to take his place and continued to pray. Abu-lulu, after he had stabbed the Caliph, committed suicide.[19] After the prayer, the Caliph was informed that the assailant was a Christian and he thanked God that it was not a Muslim who had stabbed him. The wound was deep and there was no hope of recovery. Then Umar asked A'isha's permission to be buried by the Prophet's side. He lived for four days and then died in November 644 (26 Dhulhajah, 23 A.H.).

Some Muslim historians think that the murder of Umar by Abu-lulu was not a personal action, but a political conspiracy which had been planned by enemies of Islam.[20] The hostile group was made up of four foreigners who were living in Medina: Hurmazan, the king of al-Ahwaz before the Muslim conquest; Gūfaynah, a Christian sent by Sa^{c}d bin Abi-Waggas to Medina to teach Muslim children; Abu-lulu (Fayrouz), a Persian slave of al-Mughirah ibn-Sh^{c}bah; and Ka^{c}ab al-Ahbar, a Jew from Yemen. These men hated the Muslim state and its Caliph because it had deprived them of high rank in the occupied countries. Thus, they conspired to kill the Muslim Caliph, Umar, and selected Abu-lulu to carry out the murder. Those historians mention that these men used to meet each other, discussing what had happened to their empires at the hands of the Muslims. Also, these historians think that Hurmazan would never have forgotten what Umar said when

Hurmazan had been brought as a captive to him; Umar said, "Praise be to God who humiliated this man and his followers." The Muslim historians who think of Umar's murder as a political conspiracy mention two strange incidents to prove their point. One says that one day Abu-lulu met Umar in the market of Medina; he complained to him about the high tax he was forced to pay his master, al-Mughirah. Umar told him that this was not much in light of the wages he received. Abu-lulu (Fayrouz) felt that Umar's justice affected everybody except him. He had also met with Umar a few days earlier and was asked to build a handmill for him. Abu-lulu told Umar, "If you were safe, I would build you a wind-driven handmill the East and the West would talk about."[21] Umar knew what he meant and told people the slave had threatened him.

The other story alleges that Kaab al-Ahbar came to Umar three days before his assassination and warned him that he was going to pass away. Umar wondered how Kaab knew such a thing. Kaab claimed that he had found it in the Old Testament. Umar, however, did not believe Kaab. Kaab also came to him two days later and told him that he had only one day before his death, and the following day Umar was assassinated by Abu-lulu.[22]

It was reported that after the murder of Umar, Abdul Rahman bin Abi-Bakr said he saw Hurmazan, Gūfaynah, and Abu-lulu talking secretly, but they were afraid when they

saw him and one of them dropped a dagger. Later, when he saw the dagger which was Umar's murder weapon, he recognized it as the one he had seen the day before falling from Hurmazan's hand.[23] When Abdulah ibn Umar listened to what Abdul Rahman said, he killed Hurmazan, Gūfaynah, and Abu-lulu. Another account says Abu-lulu committed suicide.[24]

The Consultation Council (ahil ashūra)

Before Umar passed away, he was asked by the Muslims to nominate his successor. Umar was loath to take the responsibility for the Caliphate after his death also. He told the Muslims:

> Do you want me to be responsible for the Caliphate in my life and in my death? If I nominate a successor, Abu-Bakr preceded me in so doing, but if I do not, the Prophet preceded me in that, and both are better than me.

The situation changed after Umar's death. At the Prophet's death, there was amongst his companions Abu-Bakr, a man of overpowering personality, a man commanding a universal respect both for his piety and his capacity, and all eyes turned to him as a fitting successor. Likewise, when Abu-Bakr's life was drawing to a close, and the question of a Caliph came up before the Muslims, fortunately Umar was still among them with his noble characteristics, and the Muslims chose him. After Umar, however, there were among the Muslims many upon whom the Prophet's mantle could most fittingly have fallen. But among them there was no one

standing out in distinct relief from the others as did Abu-Bakr and Umar in their respective times. They were all persons, more or less, of the same category. The question of a choice from among so many persons, all fitted for the same office, was a difficult problem. Umar used to say that if Abu Ubaidah ibn al Jarrah lived long enough, he would make him his successor, but Abu Ubaidah had died too soon. Hence, there was Abdul Rahman ibn ʿAuf, a great companion, whom Umar had made the Imam of the prayer during his illness. But Abdul Rahman was not willing to hold the responsibility of the Caliphate. Among others who qualified for this great office were the prominent individuals who were nominated by the dying Caliph to make the choice from among themselves. Uthman was an old companion of the Prophet and a senior, seventy years of age, who had sacrificed much on behalf of Islam and who had married two of the Prophet's daughters, one after another. There was also Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, whose strength of arm was the dread of the foe and whose erudition and piety the blessing of the friend. Another prominent man was Saʿd ibn Abi-Waqqas, the conqueror of Persia. He was a governor of Kūfa and he possessed special administrative capacities. There were also Talhah and Zubair, who enjoyed great respect for their glorious works in the service of Islam and the defense of the Prophet, and had the additional distinction of being two of the Blessed Ten (al-Ashra

al-Mubasharin). Umar charged these six persons to elect one of themselves as Caliph.[25]

He called them to his bedside, and talked to them, "Wait for your brother Talha [absent for the moment from Medina] three days; if he arrives he will be your sixth, if not decide the succession without him."

Then he talked separately to each one of them. He warned them about the high responsibility and the duty of the office of the Caliphate, and admonished the elected one to be careful not to put his clan above the other people. He especially cautioned Ali and Uthman in this, for they were from big and powerful clans (Banu Hashim and Banu Umayyah). He nominated his son Abdullah as a controller over the electors, but not as one of them. He told him, "If the electors disagree be with the majority, and if the voice be equal be on the side taken by Abdul Rahman ibn ᶜAuf."[26]

They were further instructed to make the choice within three days.

After Umar's death, five of the nominees conferred together for three days. On the fourth day, Abu Talha, who was appointed by the dying Caliph to supervise the council, warned them that they would have to reach a decision the following day. Abdul Rahman withdrew his own claim and asked the others if they would accept his choice, and they all agreed. Ali, however, asked him not to favor kith or

kin. He promised him he would not and then the issue was in the hands of Abdul Rahman ibn 'Auf. He consulted each one individually as to his opinion. Sa'd favored Uthman, while al-Zubair mentioned both Uthman and Ali. Thus, barring Abdul Rahman himself, the majority of voters were in favor of Uthman, but Abdul Rahman went a step further and sounded out the prominent figures of the nation who had assembled from all parts of the country for the pilgrimage. The trend of general opinion was in favor of Uthman. Then Abdul Rahman announced the choice of Uthman ibn Affan as Caliph. That was the first day of the year 24 A.H. (644 A.D.). Then the Muslims took the oath of allegiance to him. Talha came in that day to Medina and agreed to take the oath of allegiance to Uthman. Some modern historians claim that Uthman was elected because he was a member of the powerful clan, the Umayyads. As we saw, his election was carried out by all Muslims, after a consultation of the most prominent people in Medina and the whole country. He was chosen because of his age, his sacrifices for Islam, and his good contact with the Prophet. Uthman had occupied an important position in the affairs of state during the Caliphates of both Abu-Bakr and Umar. He was a prominent figure in the council and his advice was sought on all important matters. When Abu-Bakr was about to die, and anxious to nominate a good person to succeed him, he

consulted Uthman. The same position of trust and confidence was enjoyed by him during the reign of Umar.

Umar was unwilling to nominate a certain person and neither would he leave the Muslims without a nominee. He devised a new system of election whereby he appointed a council of six electors to elect one from among them. The consultation of other Muslims also took place before the final decision was made for Uthman. This was the most democratic way to elect a ruler. This most suitable process was used in the choice of the third Caliph of the orthodox Caliphs (al Khūlafa al-Rashdin).

In spite of the good quality of the system of the "Consultation Council" that Umar had organized before his death and its membership, composed of the best six Muslims who had been mentioned by the Prophet during his last speech at Hajjat al-Wida, and the spirit of the democracy it had, the system was criticized. Mu'āwiya bin Abi-Sufyan reportedly said that the Shūra of Umar was the reason for the differences among Muslims. For the six persons on the Shūra, each tried to win the Caliphate for himself.[27] This is untrue, for we know that most of the council members were not greedy to gain the Caliphate. Abdul Rahman bin ʿAuf withdrew his own claim, as did Sa'ad and al-Zubair, of whom one favored Uthman and the other favored Ali. Mu'āwiya favored the nomination of the Caliph for he himself came to the Caliphate without a consultation and also tried

to justify his action of administering the oath to his son Yazīd. However, Mu'āwiya's procedure in passing the Caliphate on to his son did not prevent differences among the Muslims not within the Umayyad house itself.

Some modern historians also think the Umar's system of the Shūra was ineffective,[28] for it did not have a sufficient number of controllers like Abdulah ibn Umar. They think if the Council had more than one controller, then they would control the members of the Council. So, the members would not have so much disagreement. Also, those historians criticized the time limit that Umar set for the Council to choose the Caliph, which was three days. Tāhā Hussien, the well-known Arab writer, thinks that if the system of the Council allowed more time, then the controllers could consult the Muslims outside Medina. Also, he suggests that it would be better if Umar made this Council permanent, controlling the Caliph and choosing the new Caliph.[29]

The Council is perfect either in the number of its members and the controllers or in the time set for the Council to choose the Caliph. In the matter of the members' number, it is better that the Council contents this number and not more, and if they were more, the possibility of the disagreement would be more also. The more people it had, the more differences would happen, because those extra people in the Council would have different ideas and different backgrounds, and what happened in the Saqifah after the

Prophet's death would happen again. But Umar parenthesized the number in six persons whom he thought were the best among the Muslims. The time limit of three days which Umar set for the Council was enough for the consultation, and if it was more than three days it would open the possibility of disagreement and the problem of succession would not be solved easily.

THE SUCCESSION OF ALI BIN ABI TALIB

The Assassination of Uthman

Before we discuss the election of Ali Bin Abi Talib and his succession to the Caliphate, we will mention something about the revolution, or the Fitnah, as the Muslim historians called it, which resulted in the murder of the Caliph Uthman and a major disruption for the office of the Caliphate. Egypt was the headquarters of this revolution, and ibn Saba, a Jew from Yemen, was behind it.[30] From Egypt, ibn Saba carried on a propaganda campaign and gained converts in several other parts, especially Basra and Kūfa. In Medina, ibn Saba found it difficult to spread his propaganda, although he sent two men there--Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr and Muhammad ibn Abu Hudhaifah--who were both young and had personal grudges against Uthman's administration.[31] They had had disagreements with Uthman's governor of Egypt, Abdulah ibn Sa'd, the Caliph's foster brother. When ibn Saba reached Egypt and started his propaganda against the

Caliph, he found a receptive audience in these two youths. Events moved quickly in Kūfa. The ringleaders began to openly condemn the Caliph and his officials. On one occasion, when the governor of Kufah, Said ibn al-'As, was holding one of his social gatherings, a young man, in the course of a talk that was going on, expressed a wish that the governor might come in possession of some lands, hinting thereby that he would then be in a position to patronize his friends.[32] Such a scene in the governor's presence was an affront to his authority. Also, when Said, the governor of Kūfa, returned there from Medina, the seditionists barred his entry into the town. This was open insurrection and called for vigorous measures.

The rebels from Egypt and Iraq then went to Medina to demand from the Caliph himself his explanation of mistakes they claimed he had made. Uthman discussed the matter with them.[33] They left Medina and returned again, claiming that Uthman sent an order to his governor of Egypt to kill them. Uthman denied any knowledge of that letter. We deny that Uthman wrote the letter. If he had wanted to kill them, he would have killed them in Medina. Accordingly, the rebels told the Caliph that either he knew about the letter or he did not. If he did know, he was a liar to deny the fact. In case he did not know, it would follow that his secretary was writing messages stamped with the Caliph's seal without authorization. Either of these, they told him, was enough

to disqualify him as a Caliph. Then they asked him to resign, but he refused. They seized his house for days. Uthman refused any protection and sacrificed himself for Islam. Then the rebels broke into the house and stabbed him to death while he was reading the Quran, on June 17, 656.[34]

Most historians who have analyzed the revolution against Uthman believe that the main reasons for it were Uthman's appointment of his relatives as governors and his giving them money. On the first point, when Uthman became the Caliph, he left the governors of Umar in place for a year, for that was Umar's bequest to his Caliph before he died. Uthman wrote to them to follow the same policy that they had followed under Umar.[35] A year later, however, he deposed Umar's governors and appointed new ones. He removed Umar ibn al-'As from Egypt and replaced him with Abdulah bin Sa'ad. He also appointed Abdulah bin Amir as governor of Basrah instead of Abu-Musa al-Ash'ari. At Kūfa he deposed its governor al-Mugirah ibn-Shu'aba and replaced him with Sa'ad bin Abi-Waqqas first, afterwards with his brother al-Waleed bin Agbah. Uthman also made Marwan bin al-Hakam his closest aide.[36] These governors were not as qualified in ruling as were the latter governors.

The people, therefore, complained about them. Uthman, instead of deposing the governors, called them to

Medina to discuss the people's complaints.[37] He then sent them back to their governships.

The other point was Uthman's criticism by the people for his use of the public wealth. Uthman did increase the gifts of the people, and he gave more gifts to the old companions of the Prophet. In fact, he gave al-Zubair ibn al-Awam six hundred thousand dirhems and Talha one hundred thousand dirhems.[38] However, the complaint was specifically directed at giving to his relatives. It was reported that he gave his son-in-law, al-Harith ibn al-Hakam, two hundred thousand dirhems, and he gave his uncle, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, the fifth of the land tax (Kharaj) of Africa.[39] Uthman later said that the money he had given to his relatives was from his own wealth and not from the state wealth.

These were some of the causes of the revolution against Uthman, but the immediate cause was the complaining and propaganda ibn Saba and his followers directed against the Caliph and his government.

The Election of Ali

During the last days of the reign of Uthman, the rebels, from the very day they effected their entry into Medina, were in virtual possession of the town. The government lost all hold over the city. People of Medina generally stayed indoors. After Uthman was murdered, the insurgents were in disagreement among themselves as to who would

be his successor. They comprised three bands dominated by an Egyptian group. Ibn Saba, their leader, regarded Ali as the rightful Caliph, for the Prophet had made bequests to him. The people of Medina also regarded Ali as the rightful Caliph, for he was the best among themselves.

A group of the companions of the Prophet, among them Talha and Zubair, went to Ali's house and offered to swear allegiance to him. Ali at first refused, offering instead to swear allegiance to one of them and to serve as his vizīr. In the end, because of their pressure and his duty toward Islam, Ali agreed to take the oath of allegiance, but he preferred to do it publicly in the mosque. The people swore allegiance to him on the 24th of Dhul-Hijjah, 35 A.H. (June 25, 656).[40]

Some Orientalists believe Ali's election could not be called a free election. William Muir said:

> For several days anarchy reigned in Medina. The regicides had mastery of the city. The Egyptians were foremost amongst these in the days of terror; and prayer was conducted in the mosque by their leader. Few of the inhabitants ventured out. At last, on the fifth day the rebels insisted that, before they quitted Medina, the citizens should elect a Caliph. Shrinking, no doubt from the task which Uthman's successor would have to face, Ali held back and offered to swear allegiance to either Talha or Zubair. But in the end, pressed by the threats of the regicides and entreaties of his friends, he yielded; and so, six days after the fatal tragedy, he took the oath and was saluted Caliph.[41]

Some reports claim that Talha, Zubair, and some of the Ansar did not swear allegiance to Ali,[42] while other reports say that Talha and Zubair did swear allegiance to Ali.

Nevertheless, it is true that the choice of all Muslims fell on Ali bin Abi Talib. On the previous occasion too, when Uthman was elected, the final choice was between Uthman and Ali. Uthman had voted in favor of Ali and Ali in favor of Uthman as the fittest person for the office of the Caliphate. Ali was considered the right man for the Caliphate. But the important fact was that Ali found himself confronted by a most serious situation for which he was not in any way responsible. If he could not check the inevitable course of things, no one else could have done so either. In point of fact, however, he proved the best possible solution for the good of Islam in those stormy days. So far as judgment is concerned, he had no equal among the companions of the Prophet. During the reign of Umar, an epoch which stands unique in world history in respect of territorial conquest,[43] Ali enjoyed the position of specially trusted counselor of the Caliph. No question of any consequence was settled without his consultation. In personal courage and bravery he was prominent among his contemporaries. It was he who succeeded in capturing the citadel of Khalibar.[44] In the wars during the Prophet's time, he entered into one-on-one combats against the most renowned warriors of Arabia and overpowered them. Thus, as far as the virtues of a sound judgment and courage are concerned, the choice of Ali as Caliph was the best. During his reign, there was no doubt bloodshed among the Muslims, but it must also be

remembered that whenever he saw a good opportunity to avoid bloodshed, he restrained himself.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Jacobsen, "Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia," Journal of Near Eastern Studies II (May 1943): 159-72.

[2]Abdul Mun'am Majid, al-Tārīkh al-Siyasi lil-Dawlah Arabiyah (Cairo: Makhbat al-Angilu, 1965), 1:49.

[3]Ameer, Short History of the Saracens, p. 19.

[4]Isma'il ibn Umar ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah Wa al-Nihayah fil Tariekh (Cairo: Maktbatt al-Fayallah, n.d.), p. 69.

[5]Ibid., p. 70.

[6]Muhammad Marmaduke Picktall, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1978), Surah 3, Verse 144.

[7]ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah Wa al-Nihayah fil Tārīkh, 2:78.

[8]Abi-Jaffar Muhammad ibn Girir al-Tabarī, Tārīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk, 1st ed. (Cairo: 1960), 3:47.

[9]Abdul-Hamid Bakhit, 'Asr al-Khulafa al-Rashdin (Cairo: Dar al-Mia'arief Bi Masir, 1965), p. 53.

[10]Muir, The Caliphate, p. 81.

[11]Abdul Fatah Ali Shihatah, Tarīekh al-Umah al-Arabiyah (Cairo: 1972), 1:29.

[12]al-Tabari, Tārīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk, 3:207.

[13]Shihatah, Tārīkh al-Umah al-Arabiyah, 1:30.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Muir, The Caliphate, p. 81.

[16]al-Tabari, Tārīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk, 3:59.

[17]Muir, The Caliphate, p. 85.

[18]Ibid., p. 83.

[19]ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fī-al-Tārīkh , 2:39.

[20]Shihatah, Tārīkh al-Umah al-Arabiyah, 1:250.

[21]Ibid., 1:249.

[22]Ibid., 1:250.

[23]Bakhit, 'Asr al-Khūlafa al-Rashdin, p. 198.

[24]Shihatah, Tārīkh al-Umah al-Arabiyah, 2:251.

[25]Tahā, al-Fitnah al-Khūbra, 1:61

[26]al-Tabarī, Tārīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk, 3:303.

[27]Shihatah, Tariekh al-Umah al-Arabiyah, 2:17.

[28]Tahā, al-Fitnah al-Khūbra, 1:48.

[29]Ibid., 1:62.

[30]al-Tabarī, Tārīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk, 4:340.

[31]Shihatah, Tārīkh al-Umah al-Arabiyah, 2:81.

[32]Ibid., 2:73.

[33]al-Najjar, al-Khūlafa al-Rashdūn, p. 71.

[34]Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 177.

[35]Tahā, al-Fitnah al-Khūbra, 1:73.

[36]Bakhit, 'Asr al-Khūlafa al-Rashdin, p. 219.

[37]Ibid., p. 230.

[38]Tahā, al-Fitnah al-Khūbra, 1:77.

[39]Bakhit, 'Asr al-Khūlafa al-Rashdin, p. 230.

[40]al-Tabarī, Tārīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk, 4:347.

[41]Ibid., 4:427.

[42]Muir, The Caliphate, p. 244.

[43]al-Tabarī, Tārīkh al-Rusul Wa al-Mulūk, 4:429.

[44]Muhammad Barakatullah, The Khilafat (London: 1924), p. 24.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

A major conclusion of this paper is that the succession of the Caliphate as handled in the cases of the first four Caliphs (al-Khūlafa al-Rashdin) was unique and Islamic. It was not like the ancient practice of succession to the rule which was generally by nomination within hereditary limits, and that was the most common custom in the ancient world.

The orthodox Caliphs were not from one family, neither were they chosen for their descent from the Prophet. If descent from the Prophet had been a factor in choosing a Caliph, the Muslims would have chosen the Prophet's uncle, al-Abbās. It was the close contact with the Prophet, however, and religious service on behalf of Islam, that were regarded as the most important considerations in determining the new Caliph of the Muslim community at Medina.

Another point is that the succession of each Caliph was different because the circumstances in the time of each Caliph's succession were different, but the free election and consultation of the people were always the basis for choosing the orthdox Caliphs. Abu-Bakr was selected by the people in "Saqifat Bani Saidah" in the day of the Prophet's

death, and the next day he received the oath of allegiance of all Muslims.

However, Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second Caliph of the Muslim state was nominated by Abu-Bakr, but his nomination did not take place until Abu-Bakr had consulted with most of the companions of the Prophet and asked the whole Muslim community if they agreed upon his selection of Umar to be their ruler. In fact, they all agreed with him in his selection, and all Muslims swore allegiance to Umar after Abu-Bakr's death.

Uthman ibn Affan, the third Caliph, was selected from among the Council of Electors whom Umar appointed before he passed away. However, the final decision on his succession did not happen until Abdul Rahman ibn Auff, the chief of the Council, consulted a great number of Muslims and found them agreed on Uthman as Caliph.

Ali ibn Abi-Talib, the fourth Caliph of the orthodox (the righteous), was also elected by the Muslims in Medina after the murder of Uthman in 656. The Muslims consulted among themselves and found a majority to be in agreement on Ali as successor to the Caliphate.

Other major factors governing the selection of the orthodox was the belief that the one selected to be Caliph ought to be the best person among the Muslims. The age was also considered in their selection, especially in the cases of Abu-Bakr and Uthman, but it was not very important.

The final point regarding the succession to the Caliphate by the orthodox Caliphs is that most Muslims regard their procedures in establishing succession as the most righteous and best one, and they regard that period in general as the rightly directed Caliphate. Because the men (the orthodox Caliphs) who were chosen to steer the temporal bark of Islam during this period were also models of righteousness, and they led the Muslim nation onward both temporally and spiritually. Thus their period is considered to be the best in the Islamic history except the Prophet's period. They were the most righteous monarchs that the world has ever produced.

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APPENDIX

THE ORTHODOX CALIPHS

The Name of the Caliph	Date of His Reign
Abu-Bakr al-Sidiq	632-634 (11-13 A.H.)
Umar ibn al-Khattab	634-644 (13-23 A.H.)
Uthman ibn Affān	644-656 (23-35 A.H.)
Ali ibn Abi-Talib	656-661 (35-40 A.H.)

GLOSSARY

afdal: "superior"; the best man in the Muslim community qualified for the office of the Caliphate (p. 44).

ᶜahd: "covenant"; contract written by the Caliph to nominate his successor to the Caliphate, which the Muslims had to agree on (pp. 48, 49, 54).

Ahl-al-Ḥāl Wa-al-ᶜAqd: the people who unite and tie; a group of electors to choose the Caliph (pp. 2, 44, 45, 57).

ahl-al-Ikhtiyār: the electors who participate in electing/choosing the Caliph.

ahl-al-Immāmah: the people of the Imāmate (p. 43).

ahl-al-Sunnah Wa-al-Jamāᶜah: the people of the Sunnah and the Jamāᶜah; the people of the tradition of the Prophet and consensus (pp. 3, 42, 62).

ahl-ash-Shūrā: "the people of the consultation"; council selected by the Caliph Umar before he died to choose a Caliph from among themselves (pp. 50, 91).

al-ᶜAshra al-Mubasharin: "the Blessed Ten"; ten of the Prophet's companions who were informed by the Prophet that they were going to paradise (pp. 92, 93).

al-Auss-Wa al-Khazraq: two Arab tribes who were the people of Medina (p. 55).

al-Firaq al-Islamiyyah: non-orthodox Muslims such as the Shiᶜah, the Khawarij, the Muᶜtazilah, and the Murji'ah (p. 62).

al-Ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadīyah: the Muhammadan reality; the truth according to Islam and the tradition of the Prophet (p. 38).

al-Ḥijābah: gatekeeper; a position for the one who served in the court of the Abbāsid Caliphs (p. 2).

al-Imamah al-Kubrā: the Greater Imamate (p. 35).

al-Imāmah al-Ṣuqrā: the lesser Imamate (p. 35).

al-Insān al-Kāmil: the Perfect Man; see also Quṭb.

al-Khīlāfah al-Baṭinah: the Hidden Caliphate; the spiritual approach toward the Caliphate system (p. 39).

al-Khilāfah al-Ẓahirah: the Manifest Caliphate; the worldly approach toward the Caliphate system (p. 39).

al-Khūlafā al-Rāshūn: "the Rightly Guided"; the term refers to the period from 632-661 A.D. when Abu-Bakr, ᶜUmar, ᶜUthman, and ᶜAli were the first four Caliphs (pp. 39, 106).

al-Muwallā: "the nominee"; the one whom the Caliph appointed to be his successor (p. 61).

al-Raᶜayah: "the public"; in the Ottoman Empire, it initially meant all non-Osmanli (p. 58).

al-Shūra: "the Consultation"; an Islamic system of rule which depends on discussion by the people of any important matter in the community (pp. 78, 95, 96).

al-Wizārah: an Arabic word which means ministry (p. 2).

Amir al-Muminin: "the Commander of the Faithful"; title adopted by Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab and succeeding Caliphs (p. 34).

amīr al-Umarā: Chief Prince or Commander of the Commander; title granted to powerful military leaders in Baghdad around 324/936 (p. 25).

Ansar: "helpers"; term used to designate the Medinais who supported the Prophet (pp. 31, 79, 80, 81).

ᶜasabīyya: "blood relationship"; term made famous by historian Ibn-Khaldun, implying a group solidarity (pp. 38, 75).

Atahkiem: "arbitration"; an agreement reached between ᶜAli and Mūᶜawiya after the battle of Siffīn in 658 to use arbitration for ending the conflict between them. ᶜAli was represented by Abū-Mussa al-'Ashᶜari and Mūᶜawiya by ᶜAmir ibn al-'Ass (p. 65).

bāṭin: lit. the Hidden Side; the esoteric interpretation of sacred texts (p. 38).

Bayᶜah: oath of allegiance (pp. 38, 42, 48, 54, 55, 56, 56, 58, 83, 84, 85, 87).

bayᶜat al-ᶜammah: when the oath of allegiance was given to the Caliph by the public (p. 55).

Bayᶜat al ᶜAqab'ah al Ūlla: "the first ᶜAqba treaty"; a treaty signed between Prophet Muhammad and the people of Medina in 620. The next year they signed a bargain treaty which offered the Prophet full protection when he came to Medina, and this was called "Bayᶜat al-ᶜAqba al-Thanya" (p. 55).

bayᶜat al-Khassah: when the oath of allegiance was given to the Caliph by the notables of the community (p. 55).

biᶜahd Manqablahū: "nomination by a predecessor"; state when the nominee goes to the office of the Caliphate with a nomination by the predecessor Caliph (p. 43).

bidᶜa: "innovation"; a belief or practice not found in the Sunnah; that which the traditionalists would consider an unacceptable practice (p. 9).

Byūtt al-Shaᶜar: tents which were made of animal hair, usually inhabited by the Bedouins of Arabia (p. 75).

Fatwa: opinion on legal question issued by mufti (judge) (p. 59).

Fitnah: rebellion or civil war. Fitnah against the Caliph Uthman (656) and Fitnah of ibn al-Zubayar (683-693 A.D.) were very important in Islamic history (p. 97).

Ghadir Khumm: hadith of the Prophet which was applied by the Shiᶜah Muslims for the right of ᶜAli bin Abi-Talib to be the Prophet's successor (p. 63).

Hadith: "tradition"; tradition relating to what Prophet Muhammad said and did; one of four principal sources of the Shariᶜa (pp. 33, 60, 61, 63, 64).

Hajjat al-Widaᶜ: "the Farewell Pilgrimage"; the last pilgrimage to Mecca by the Prophet Muhammad in the year 632 A.D. (p. 78).

Hayy: "camp"; neighborhood of the Arab tribe (p. 75).

ijmaᶜ: "agreement"; consensus of scholarly community of believers on a religious regulation; one of the principal sources of the Sharīᶜa (pp. 49, 50).

Imām: "leader"; (1) leader of prayer in the Muslim community--as such was a title of Caliphs; (2) for Ismāᶜilī and Ithnāᶜasharī Shiᶜī the Imām is the necessary, divinely guided, infallible, sinless, political and religious leader (pp. 32, 35, 63).

ᶜismah: "infallibility"; belief by the Shiᶜah that the Imāms (Caliphs) never make mistakes (p. 64).

Jihad: the holy war, whose goal is either to spread Islam or to defend Muslim lands (p. 62).

Kaᶜbah: name of sacred "cube-shaped" building in Mecca containing the Black Stone, a meteorite which, along with the building, is regarded as holy. Muslims pray toward the Kaᶜbah (p. 54).

Khalīfah: "Caliph" or "successor"; the title implied continuation by its holder of the Prophet's religious and political leadership over the Muslim community but without the prophetic function (pp. 29, 31, 34, 37, 38).

Kharaj: the land tax which opposed to Jizya (p. 100).

Khutbat al-Jumᶜah: sermon given at the Friday noon prayer by Khatib (speaker); sermon used for disseminating political information, as well as a religious instruction vehicle. One symbol of the political sovereignty of a ruler was mentioning his name in the Khutba (p. 60).

Laqab: "title"; honorific part of a Muslim name, many times as a compound ending in _____al Dīn or _____ Dawla, such as Salah al-Dīn (p. 60).

Mafdūl: "inferior"; good person who qualified for the office of the Caliphate (p. 44).

Majlis: "council"; an assembly of the Arab tribe which usually contains the experienced and elderly persons of the tribe (p. 74).

Malaka: he became a ruler (p. 6).

Muhajirin: "immigrants"; Meccan emigrants who joined the Prophet Muhammad in Medina (p. 81).

Mūrid: "initiate"; one who begins in a sūfi order (p. 39).

Mū'tah: one of the holy wars of Muslims during the lifetime of the Prophet.

The Qur'an: the Muslim Holy Book"; containing God's revelations as revealed in Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad, and the basis for the Islamic way of life (pp. 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 61).

Qutb: pivot; the spiritual leader; the ṣufī master (p. 38).

Sahabā: the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (p. 85).

Salah: pray; ritual prayer to be performed by Muslims five times a day (p. 35).

Saqifat Bani Saiᶜdah: a hall used as a council room by the people of Medina (pp. 80, 81).

The Sharīᶜa: "Islamic law"; it is based on Qur'an, Hadīth, Quyās, and Ijmāᶜ (p. 29).

Sheikh al-Qabilā: "Chief of the Tribe"; title for the leader of the Arab tribe (p. 74).

Tarīqah: term applied to sūfī orders, as well as the "path" followed by sūfīs to reach gnosis (p. 39).

Walayat-i-'ammah: "General Guardianship"; belief by Shiᶜa Muslims that the Prophet made ᶜAli Wali (Guardian) on the Muslims like himself (p. 63).

Wali-al-ᶜahd: the one who was nominated by the Caliph to be his successor (pp. 48, 49)

Waṣiyah: the will (p. 54).

Zakāt: "religious tax"; obligatory alms tax on all Muslims (p. 12).